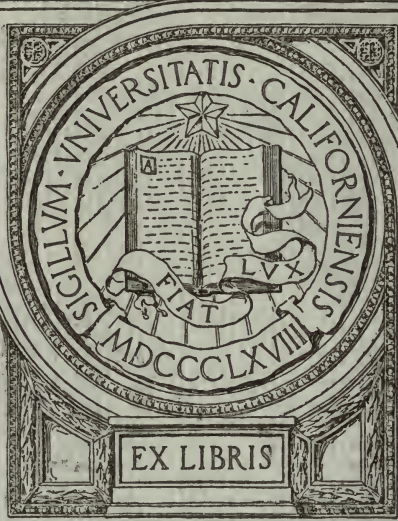


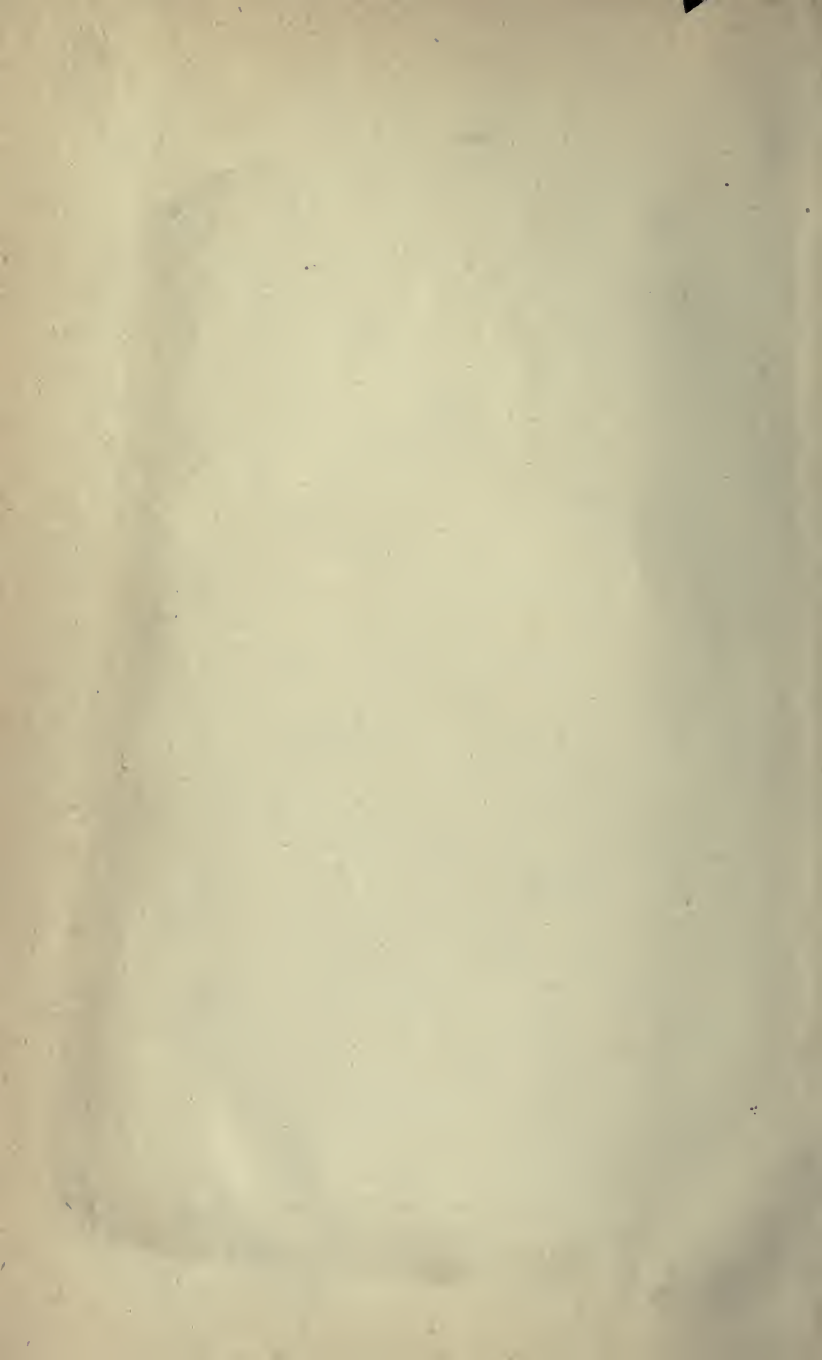
ITALIAN SKETCHES





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OLD FLORENCE AND MODERN TUSCANY.



# ITALIAN SKETCHES

BY

JANET ROSS

*ILLUSTRATED BY CARLO ORSI*

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1887

TO THE  
AUTHORS

DG426  
R6

## PREFACE.



SEVERAL of the following sketches have already been published, and I owe to the courtesy of Messrs. Macmillan and Messrs. Longman the permission to reprint them.\*

Some will think my pictures of the Tuscan peasants flattered and highly coloured. I can only say that I have lived among them for eighteen years, and that nowhere does the golden rule, "Do as you would be done by," hold good so much as in Italy. We have not changed a servant since we came to live here, and they take as much care of, and as much pride in all that belongs to "us," as they say, as if it was their own property. A noted ne'er-do-well of the little village near by, who had been in prison seventeen times for petty thefts, and

\* "Old Florence and Modern Tuscany," "The Dove of Holy Saturday," "Vintaging in Tuscany," "Oil-making in Tuscany," "The Baths of Casciana in July," "Tarentum," and "Leucaspidè"—*Macmillan's Magazine*. "A September Day in the Valley of the Arno"—*English Illustrated Magazine*. "Popular Songs of Tuscany"—*Fraser's Magazine*. "Virgil and Agriculture in Tuscany"—*Longman's Magazine*.



to whom I was helpful, came some time ago at nightfall, desiring to see the "Signora" on important business. All Tuscans dearly love a small mystery, but I found that my friend really had grave tidings.

"Brozzi, Peretola, e Campi  
Son la peggio genia che Cristo stampi,"

("Brozzi, Peretola, and Campi  
Are the worst lot ever made by Christ,")

says the old proverb ; and the inhabitants of these villages are famous for their thieving propensities. My *obligato* (obliged one), as he calls himself, came to tell me that a raid was intended on all the henroosts of the country, and knowing that I valued my Cochins and Brahmas, wanted to warn me and the gamekeeper, adding that he should try and prevent them from paying us a visit. Next morning lamentation was general, for many had lost their fowls. I escaped, but we invested in two enormous Maremma sheep-dogs, whose fierceness is proverbial.

I could tell other such stories ; for, as my mother says in her "Letters from Egypt," I "sit among the people," and do not "make myself big," a proceeding an Italian resents as much as an Arab.

JANET ROSS.



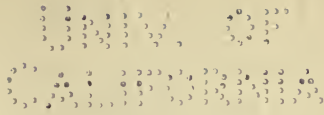
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# ITALIAN SKETCHES.



## *OLD FLORENCE AND MODERN TUSCANY.*

“ FLORENCE within her ancient limit-mark,  
Which calls her still to matin prayers and noon,  
Was chaste and sober, and abode in peace.  
She had no amulet, no head-tires then,  
No purfled dames ; no zone, that caught the eye  
More than the person did. Time was not yet,  
When at his daughters’ births the sire grew pale,  
For fear the age and dowry should exceed,  
On each side, just proportion. House was none,  
Void of its family ; nor yet had come  
Sardanapalus to exhibit feats  
Of chamber prowess. Montemalo yet  
O’er our suburban turret rose ; as much  
To be surpast in fall, as in its rising.  
I saw Bellincion Berti walk abroad  
In leathern girdle, and a clasp of bone ;  
And, with no artificial colouring on her cheeks,  
His lady leave the glass. The sons I saw  
Of Nerli, and of Vecchio, well content  
With unrobed jerkin ; and their good dames handling  
The spindle and the flax. Oh, happy they ! ”

Thus writes Dante, in the "Paradise" about the sobriety and simplicity of dress and manners in Florence of his day; and nearly a century later G. Villani writes:

"The citizens of Florence lived soberly, on coarse viands and at small cost; they were rude and unpolished in many customs and courtesies of life, and dressed themselves and their women in coarse cloth; many wore plain leather, without cloth over it; bonnets on their heads; and all, boots on their feet. The Florentine women were without ornament; the better sort being content with a close gown of scarlet cloth of Ypres or of camlet, tied with a girdle in the ancient mode, and a mantle lined with fur, with a hood attached to be worn on the head. The common sort of women were clad in a coarse gown of cambrai in like fashion."

Things appear to have changed soon after this, as the sage old Florentines drew up a series of sumptuary laws in 1415, directed against the luxury and splendour of women's dress and of marriage festivals. They declared that such magnificence was opposed to all republican laws and usages, and only served to enervate and corrupt the people. If a citizen of Florence wished to give an entertainment in honour of a guest, he was obliged to obtain a permit from the Priors of Liberty, for which he paid ten golden florins, and had also to swear that such splendour was only exhibited for the honour and glory of the city. Whoever transgressed this law was fined

twenty-five golden florins. It was considered shameful to have much plate; nearly all household implements were of brass, now and then beautified by having the arms of the family in enamel upon them. These sumptuary laws were not confined to Florence. The town of Pistoja enacted similar ones in 1322; Perugia in 1333. Phillippe le Bel promulgated sumptuary laws in France in 1310; Charles IX. in 1575; and Louis XIII. in 1614; but with no greater success than the worthy old republicans.

Pandolfini, in his curious book, "Del Governo della Famiglia," inveighs against the Florentine custom of painting the face. In his counsels to his young wife, Giovanna degli Strozzi, he says:—

"Avoid all those false appearances by which dishonest and bad women try to allure men, thinking with ointments, white lead and paint, with lascivious and immoral dress, to please men better than when adorned with simplicity and true honesty. Not only is this reprehensible, but it is most unwholesome to corrupt the face with lime, poisons, and so-called washes. See, oh, my wife, how fresh and well-looking are all the women of this house! This is because they use only water from the well as an ointment; do thou likewise, and do not plaster and whiten thy face, thinking to appear more beautiful in my eyes. Thou art fresh and of a fine colour; think not to please me by cheaterly and showing thyself to me as

thou art not, because I am not to be deceived; I see thee at all hours, and well I know how thou art without paint.”

The Florentine ladies appear to have held their own against all these attempts to convert them to a simpler mode of life. Sachetti gives an amusing instance of their ready wit, while he was Prior of the Republic. A new judge, Amerigo degli Amerighi, came from Pesaro, and was specially ordered to see that the sumptuary laws were obeyed; he fell into disgrace for doing too little, and his defence is as follows:—

“ My masters, I have worked all my life at the study of law, and now that I thought I knew something I find I know nothing; for trying to discover the forbidden ornaments worn by your women, according to the orders you gave me, I have not found in any law-book arguments such as they give. I will cite you some. I met a woman with a border, all curiously ornamented and slashed, turned over her hood; the notary said to her, ‘Give me your name, for you have an embroidered border.’ The good woman takes off the border, which was attached to her hood with a pin, and holding it in her hand, replies that it is a garland. There are others who wear many buttons down the front of their dresses; I say to one, ‘You may not wear those buttons,’ and she answers, ‘Yes, sir, I can, for these are not buttons, but *coppelle*, and if you do not believe me, see, they have no haft, and there are no buttonholes.’ The notary goes up to a third, who



was wearing ermine, and says, 'How can you excuse yourself, you are wearing ermine?' and begins to write the accusation. The woman replies, 'No, do not write, for this is not ermine, but *lattizzo* (fur of any young sucking animal).' The notary asked, 'And what is this *lattizzo*?' And the woman's answer was, 'The man is a fool!'"

The widows seem to have given less trouble; but they always took care that their dresses should be well cut and fit perfectly.

Philosophers, of course, wrote treatises on political economy, and poets satirized the different fashions of their times. Thus, in "Lodovico Adimari," we read:—

"The high-born dame now plasters all her cheeks  
 With paint by shovelfuls, and in curled rings  
 Or tortuous tresses twines her hair, and seeks  
 To shave with splintered glass the down that springs  
 On her smooth face and soft skin, till they seem  
 The fairest, tenderest of all tender things :  
 Rouge and vermilion make her red lips beam  
 Like rubies burning on the brow divine  
 Of heaven-descended Iris : jewels gleam  
 About her breasts, embroidered on the shrine  
 Of satins, silks, and velvets : like the snails,  
 A house in one dress on her back she trails." \*

Cennino Cennini, a painter and pupil of Agnolo Gaddi, the godson of Giotto, says, in his "Treatise on Painting":

"It might be for the service of young ladies, more especially those of Tuscany, to mention some colours

\* Translated by Mr. J. A. Symonds.

which they think highly of, and use for beautifying themselves ; and also certain washes. But as those of Padua do not use such things, and I do not wish to make myself obnoxious to them, or to incur the displeasure of God and of Our Lady, so I shall say no more on this subject. But," he continues, "if thou desirest to preserve thy complexion for a long time, I advise thee to wash thyself with water from fountains, rivers, or wells. I warn thee that if thou usest cosmetics thy face will become hideous and thy teeth black ; thou wilt be old before thy time, and the ugliest object possible. This is quite enough to say on this subject."

Cennini seems, notwithstanding, to have been employed to paint people's faces, if we may judge from the following passage in the same work :—

"Sometimes you may be obliged to paint or dye flesh, faces of men and women in particular. You can mix your colours with yolk of egg ; or should you wish to make them more brilliant, with oil, or liquid varnish, the strongest of all *temperas*. Do you want to remove the colours or *tempera* from the face ? Take yolk of egg and rub it, a little at a time, with your hand on the face. Then take clean water, in which bran has been boiled, and wash the face ; then more of the yolk of egg, and again rub the face with it ; and again wash with warm water. Repeat this many times until the face returns to its original colour."



The sumptuary laws cited by the *Osservatore Fiorentino* are as follow :—

“ 1st. It is forbidden for any unmarried woman to wear pearls or precious stones, and the married dames may only wear ornaments to the value of forty golden florins at any one time.

“ 2nd. In the week preceding a wedding, neither bride nor bridegroom may ask to dinner or supper more than four persons not appertaining to the house.

“ 3rd. The brides who desire to go to church on horse-back may do so, but are not to be accompanied by more than six women attendants.

“ 4th. On the marriage day, only sixteen women may dine in the bridegroom’s house, six of the bride’s family and ten of the bridegroom’s, besides his mother, his sisters, and his aunts.

“ 5th. There may only be ten men of the family, and eight friends ; boys under fourteen do not count.

“ 6th. During the repast, only three musicians and singers are to be allowed.

“ 7th. The dinner or supper may not consist of more than three solid dishes, but confectionery and fruit *ad libitum*.

“ 8th. The bride and bridegroom are allowed to invite two hundred people to witness the signing of the contract before the celebration of the marriage.”

These laws, however, appear to have been of little use,

to judge by the representation of the marriage procession of Boccaccio degli Adimari on the *cassone*, or marriage-chest, the painted front of which is now in the Academia delle Belle Arte, at Florence. Men and women magnificently clad are walking hand in hand, under a canopy of red and white damask, supported by poles, and stretched from the lovely little Loggia del Bigallo, past Lorenzo Ghiberti's famous doors of the baptistry of San Giovanni, to the corner of Via de' Martelli. The trumpeters of the Republic sit on the steps of the Loggia, blowing their golden trumpets ornamented with square flags, on which is emblazoned the lily of the city of Florence. Pages in gorgeous clothes, and carrying gold and silver vases on their heads, are passing in and out of one of the Adimari palaces. A man behind the musicians holds a flask of wine in his hand, just the same flask as one sees now in daily use in Tuscany. The ladies have head-dresses like large turbans; one is made of peacock's feathers, and all are sparkling with jewels.

Funerals were also a great source of show and splendour in those days, and their cost increased rapidly. In 1340 the funeral of Gherardo Baroncelli cost only two hundred golden florins, and about the same time that of Giotto Peruzzi five hundred; whereas, in 1377, the expenses for the burial of Monaldo Alberti di Messer Niccolao d'Jacopo degli Alberti amounted to three thousand golden florins, nearly five thousand pounds.

The following details of this magnificent affair, from the manuscript of Monaldi, may interest the curious reader :—

“ Monaldo Alberti di Messer Niccolao d’Jacopo degli Alberti, died on the 7th of August, 1377 ; he passed for the richest man, as regards money, in the country. He was buried on the 8th of August, in Santa Croce, with great honour of torches and wax candles. The funeral car was of red damask, and he was dressed in the same red damask, in cloth and in cloth of gold. There were eight horses, one decked with the arms of the people, because he was a cavalier of the people ; one with the arms of the Guelphs, because he was one of their captains ; two horses were covered with big banners, on which were emblazoned the Alberti arms ; one horse had a pennant, and a casque and sword and spurs of gold, and on the casque was a damsel with two wings ; another horse was covered with scarlet, and his rider had a thick mantle of fur, lined ; another horse was undraped, and his rider wore a violet cloak lined with dark fur.

“ When the body was removed from the arcade of the house, there was a sermon ; seventy-two torches surrounded the car, that is to say, sixty belonged to the house, and twelve to the Guelph party. A large catafalque was all furnished with torches of a pound weight ; and the whole church, and the chief chapels towards the

centre of the church, were full of small torches of half a pound weight, often interspersed with those of one pound. All the relations, and those of close parentage with the house of Alberti, were dressed in blood-red ; and all the women who belonged to them, or had entered the family by marriage, wore the same colour. Many other families were in black. A great quantity of money was there to give away for God, etc. Never had been seen such honours. This funeral cost something like three thousand golden florins."

The Medici made no attempt to control this splendour ; indeed, one of Lorenzo the Magnificent's favourite sayings was, "*Pane e feste tengon il popol quieto*" (Bread and shows keep the people quiet). Cosmo I. had a passion for jousts and games of all sorts ; ballets on horseback and masquerades ; these were generally held in the Piazza Sta. Croce. The masquerade, in 1615, to celebrate the arrival of Ubaldo della Rovere, Prince of Urbino, has been engraved by Jacques Callot, and was called the War of Love. First came the chariot of Love, surrounded with clouds, which opened showing Love and his court. Then came the car of Mount Parnassus with the Muses, Paladins, and famous men of letters. The third was the chariot of the Sun, with the twelve signs of the zodiac, the serpent of Egypt, the months and seasons ; this chariot was surrounded by eight Ethiopian giants. The car of Thetis closed the procession, with

Sirens, Nereids, and Tritons, and eight giant Neptunes, to represent the principal seas of the world.

Ferdinand II. also delighted in these shows, and several held during his reign have been engraved by Stefano della Bella and Jacques Callot.

Princess Violante of Bavaria, who came, in 1689, to marry Ferdinand, son of Cosmo III., was received with great splendour. She entered Florence by the Porta San Gallo, where a chapel had been erected on purpose to crown her as she crossed the threshold of the city. The princess then seated herself on a jewelled throne, and was carried into the town under a canopy borne by a number of youths, splendidly dressed, and chosen for their beauty and high birth. After a solemn thanksgiving in the cathedral, she was escorted to the Pitti Palace by the senate and the chief people of the city. The carnival feasts that year were more magnificent than usual in her honour.

T. Rinnucini, writing to a friend in the beginning of the seventeenth century, gives the following quaint account of a wedding in his own family:—

“When the alliance was arranged, we went in person to all our near relatives, and sent servants to those of remoter kin, to give notice of the day on which the bride would leave our house in her bridal attire; so that all relations down to the third degree might accompany her to mass. At the house door, we found a company of



youths, the *seraglio*, as we say, who complimented my niece, and made as though they would not allow her to quit the house until she bestowed on them rings or clasps, or some such trinkets. When she had, with infinite grace, given the usual presents, the spokesman of the party, who was the youngest, and of high family, waited on the bride, and served her as far as the church door, giving her his arm. After the marriage, we had a grand banquet, with all the relations on both sides, and the youths of the *seraglio*, who, in truth, have a right to be present at the feast."

In other descriptions of marriages about the same time, we read that during the banquet a messenger sought audience of the bride, and presented her with a basket of flowers, or a pair of scented gloves sent by the *seraglio*, together with the rings, clasps, or other ornaments she had given them on leaving her father's house. The bridegroom, according to his means, gave the messenger thirty, forty, fifty, or even, if very rich, a hundred *scudi*, which the youths spent in a great feast to their companions and friends, in a masquerade, or some such entertainment.

The marriage-ring was given on another day, when there was a feast of white confectionery, followed by dancing, if the size of the house permitted it. Otherwise the company played at *giulè*, a game of cards no longer known; the name being derived, says Salvini, from the

coin called *giulio*, worth fifty-six *centimes*, which was placed in a plate in the middle of the table as the stake.

At the beginning of the feast, the names of the guests were read out according to their different degrees of parentage, so that all might find their places without confusion.

The bride's dower was carried in procession to the bridegroom's house, in the *cassoni*, or marriage-chests, which varied in splendour according to the riches of the family. Some were of carved wood, some inlaid, others covered with velvet ornamented with richly gilt ironwork, and the finest of all were painted, often by famous artists, with the deeds of the ancestors of the family. The great luxury consisted in fine linen; "twenty dozen of everything," was the rule in those days, which is still adhered to among old-fashioned people in Tuscany.

It was in such a marriage-chest that the beautiful Ginevra dei Benci, whose portrait exists in the fresco by Ghirlandajo in Sta. Maria Novella, hid while playing hide and seek the evening before her marriage. The *cassone* was of carved wood, and the heavy lid closed upon her, snapping the lock fast. All search for her was vain, and the old tale says that her fair fame suffered at the hands of malicious women, jealous of her exceeding beauty. Years afterwards, when the chest was forced open, the remains of the lovely Ginevra were found, still, it is said, preserving traces of beauty, and

with the peculiar scent she used still lingering about her long, fair hair ; in her right hand she grasped the jewel her bridegroom had given her to fasten the front of her gown. In Florence, the *bella Ginevra* is still talked about among the common people as the ideal type of woman's beauty.

All these old usages have vanished now among the gentlefolk of Florence, but some yet linger among the *contadini*, or peasantry, who are essentially conservative, and opposed to change. Sir Henry Maine has described\* a state of things among the South Slavonians and Rajpoots which is curiously like the life of the Tuscan *contadino* of the present day.

The house community of the South Slavonians despotically ruled by the paterfamilias; and the house-mother, who governs the women of the family, though always subordinate to the house-chief, is almost a counterpart of the primitive custom still prevailing in Tuscany, and doubtless existing in the days of the gallant youths and fair ladies we have mentioned above.

In all dealings of the *contadini* with strangers the *capoccio*, or head-man, represents the family, and his word or signature binds them all collectively. He administers the family affairs, and arranges what work is to be done during the day, and who is to do it. No member of the family can marry without his consent, ratified by that of

\* In the *Nineteenth Century*, December, 1877.



the *padrone*, or landlord, and he keeps the common purse. On Saturday night, the men state their wants to him, and he decides whether they are reasonable, and, above all, whether the family finances permit their realization. The rule of the *capoccio* is extremely despotic, for I have known the case of an old man, the uncle of the head-man, being kept for some time without his weekly pittance for buying snuff as a punishment for disobeying an order.

The dignity of *capoccio* is hereditary and generally goes to the eldest son, although it happens that he may be passed over, and an uncle or a younger brother chosen to fill the position, by the *padrone*, to whom the *capoccio* is responsible for the behaviour of the rest of the family. Should he fall hopelessly ill, the family inform the *padrone* in an indirect way, who suggests to the head-man that he should abdicate; but in this case, and indeed whenever it is practicable, the choice of the successor is left to the *capoccio* himself, in order to maintain the dignity of the position.

The *massaia*, or house-mother, is generally one of the oldest women in the house; often the mother or the wife of the head-man, but occasionally of more distant kin. She retains the post until her death, and rules over the women, keeping the purse for the smaller house expenses, such as linen, clothes for the women, pepper, salt, and white rolls for the small children. All these

are bought with the proceeds of the work of the women themselves, which includes the care of the silkworms, of the poultry, if they are permitted by the landlord to keep fowls, and the straw-plaiting, which is universal in the lower Val d'Arno. The girls, from the age of fourteen, are allowed a certain time every day to work for their dowry, generally in the evening.

A bride brings into her husband's house a bed, some linen, a *caSSone*, her personal clothes, and a *vezzo*, a necklace of several strings of irregular pearls, costing from five to a hundred pounds, according to the wealth of her father, or the amount she has been able to earn. The *vezzo* always represents half the dowry, and those who are too poor to buy pearls get a necklace of dark-red coral.

After a due course of courtship—during which the young man visits his *innamorata* every Saturday evening and on holidays, bringing her a flower, generally a carnation, or a rose in the summer months, and improvising (if he can) *terze* or *ottave* rhymes in her honour, which he sings as he nears the house—the *capoccio* dons his best clothes, and goes in state to ask the hand of the girl for his son, brother, nephew, or cousin, as it may be. When the affair is settled, after much talking and gesticulation, like everything else in Tuscany, a *stimatore* or *savio*, an appraiser or wise-man, is called in, who draws up an account of all the bride's possessions. This

paper, duly signed and sealed, is consigned to the *capoccio* of the bridegroom's house, who keeps it carefully, as should the young man die without leaving children, the wife has a right to the value of all she brought into her husband's house. If there are children, the *capoccio* is the sole guardian, and he administers their property for them, unless the mother has reason to think him harsh or unfaithful, when she may call for a *consiglio di famiglia*, or family council, who name two or more administrators.

A widow may elect to remain in her adopted family and look after her children, who by law belong to the representative of their father; or she can leave her children and return to her own people if they are able and willing to receive her, which is not often the case, as in Tuscany the *contadini* marry their children by rotation, so that often the younger sons or daughters have to wait for years, until the elder are settled in life. It would be an unheard-of thing for a younger daughter to marry before her elder sister.

Second marriages of widows with children are rare, as the woman would seldom be allowed to bring her children by the first husband into the house, and the folk-songs and proverbs are condemnatory of the practice:—

*Quando la capra ha passato il poggiolo non si ricorda piu del figliuolo* (When the she-goat has crossed the hillock, she forgets her young).

*Dio ti guardi da donna due volte maritate* (God preserve thee from a twice-married woman).

*Quando si maritan vedove, il benedetto va tutto il giorno per casa* (When widows marry, the dear departed is all day long about the house).

“ La vedovella quando sta'n del letto,  
 Colle lagrime bagna le lenzuola ;  
 E si rivolta da quel altro verso :  
 Accanto ci si trova la figliola.  
 O figlia mia, se tu non fossi nata,  
 Al mondo mi sarei rimaritata.”

(The widow lying in her bed,  
 With tears bedews the sheets ;  
 And turns round to the other side,  
 Where her daughter is.  
 Oh, my daughter, dear, if thou hadst not been born,  
 I should have found another husband in this world.)

After seven years of age, the children are by law allowed to choose with whom they will live, and I have known some cases of children leaving their mother and coming of their own accord to their uncle or grandfather, begging to be taken into the paternal house.

When a marriage is settled, the family of the bride invites the *capoccio* and the bridegroom to dinner, to meet all her relations. This is called the *impalmamento*, and many toasts are drunk to the health of the young couple. It is considered highly improper for the bride to visit her future home, and even in her walks she takes care to avoid it. The other members of her family may

visit it, but she would be dishonoured for ever if she went near her bridegroom's house.

The peasantry now almost universally observe the new law of civil marriage, but they still regard it as a mere form, and look on the religious ceremony as the important thing. The civil marriage is often celebrated three or four days before the religious service, and the girl goes quietly home to her father's house until the day fixed for the latter.

In some parts of the Val d'Arno the custom of being married after sundown prevails, and the bride wears a black dress, with a white bonnet or cap, and white gloves, while, even in winter, a fan is an indispensable adjunct to her costume. Bridesmaids are unknown, as no unmarried girl is ever present at a marriage. The bride is attended to church by her father and mother, and her male and married female relations. The bridegroom's mother, or the *massaia* of his house, stays at home to welcome her new daughter, whom she meets on the threshold of the house with *il bacio di benvenuto* (the kiss of welcome). At the dinner or supper, as the case may be, everybody in turn makes a *brindisi* to the young couple. The female relations of the bride do not go to this dinner, and she makes up a basket of eatables to send home by one of the men.

During the first week of her marriage, the bride is expected to be up before any one else, to light the fire and



prepare coffee for the men before they go into the fields, and to cook the hot meal either at noon or in the evening, to show that she is a good housewife.

On the first Sunday or holiday following the wedding, the mother and sisters of the bride come to see her, and the following week, some of the family of the bridegroom accompany him and his young wife to her old home, where they dine ; and this closes the festivities.

It occasionally happens that a family of peasants, living in the same house and originally nearly related, in the lapse of years lose relationship so completely that they might intermarry, but such a thing very rarely happens. I know a family of twenty-seven who are three distinct branches of the same family, but whose relationship dates back more than a hundred years. They, however, regard each other as of one family, and implicitly obey the *capoccio*, who is a comparatively young man.

The *mezzeria* or *métayer* system generally prevailing in Tuscany induces a patriarchal feeling between landlord and peasant, which is very pleasant to see, but is not conducive to agricultural progress, or a good thing for the landlord. He pays all the taxes to Government, which are enormous ; he provides the house rent free, and keeps it in repair ; he buys the oxen, cows, and horses, bearing half the loss if they die, and of course getting half the profit when they are sold. The peasant gives his

labour, the landlord gives the land and the capital, and the proceeds are divided between them. In bad years, the landlord advances corn to his peasants, which they repay when they can, in wine, oil, beans, etc. Where there is a large family of young children, the peasant sometimes accumulates a load of debt that cripples him for years; in rare instances the landlord turns him out at six months' notice, and puts another family on the farm; but, as a rule, the peasants remain for generations on the same property, and always talk of themselves as the *gente* (people) of their landlord.

The English farmer does not exist in Tuscany; none of the peasants have enough capital to lease land, and if they had they would not do it, being so much better off under the *mezzeria*. If a peasant leased a farm, he would probably starve in a bad season, instead of tiding it over as he now does by the *padrone's* help.

The small proprietors are gradually disappearing in Tuscany; they cannot pay the enormous taxes and live. One never takes up a newspaper without seeing a list of small proprietors whose *podere* are for sale, by order of the *esattore* or tax-gatherer. The Tuscans are a gentle and long-suffering people, but such a condition of things produces a vast amount of discontent and hatred of the Government, and destroys a valuable class of trustworthy, orderly citizens.

When a *contadino* is sent away, he occasionally finds a

new *poderi*, but most commonly sinks in the social scale, and becomes a *bracciante* or day labourer, when his lot is miserable enough. The usual wage in Tuscany is one franc, twelve centimes, about elevenpence a day. The day's work begins at sunrise and lasts till sunset, with half-an-hour's rest for breakfast at eight in the morning and one hour for lunch at midday. In the great heat of summer the midday rest is prolonged, and the men come earlier and go away later from their work. When the weather is bad they are days without employment; and where there are many small children, the family is often at starvation point. The women in the lower Val d'Arno are universally occupied in straw plaiting, and if very expert can, in exceptional years, and for a short time, gain as much as tenpence a day. But fashion is always changing, and new plaits have to be learned, so that the average gain rarely exceeds twenty *centimes*, or twopence a day. When the Japanese rush hats came into fashion, there was very great misery among all the poor plaiters, as Leghorn straw hats were almost unsaleable.

Going out to service is looked upon as a degradation among the Tuscan peasantry, and when you find a woman of that class in service she is certain to be either a childless widow, a burden on her own family and unkindly treated by the relatives of her late husband, or a girl who has not been allowed to marry as she wished.



The *contadino* almost invariably chooses a wife in his own class, generally from a neighbouring family. Favourite proverbs among the peasants are—

*Donne e buoi de' paesi tuoi* (Women and oxen from thine own country). Or,

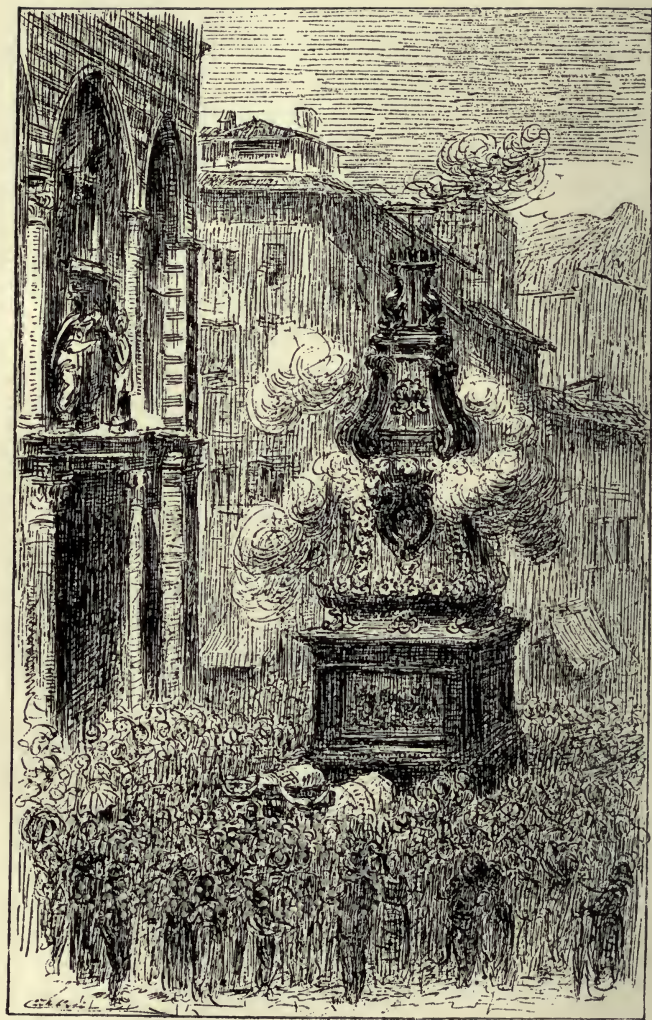
*Chi di lontano si va a maritare, sara ingannato o vuol ingannare* (He who seeks a wife from a distance will be deceived, or attempts deception).

You will seldom find a peasant above thirty who can write and read, though some have learnt to sign their names in a sort of hieroglyph. The rising generation are being instructed in a desultory manner, and are wonderfully quick at learning. Every man in the army is forced to learn under penalty of being kept in the ranks until he can read, write, and cipher decently well; so that one may say that the army is one vast school. The conscription is, however, a very heavy tax, particularly on the agricultural population, and entails great misery. The loss, for three years, of the son, who in many cases is the chief bread-winner for his younger brothers and sisters, or for an invalid father, often reduces the family to beggary. I need not add that the loss to the country is enormous.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the army is the great, and probably the only, method of gradually fusing the different Italian races—I had almost said nationalities. Since the Middle Ages, the hatred between

not only the different provinces, but between the towns and even the smallest villages, has always existed, and is still extremely strong. An Italian seldom, if ever, in Italy at least, talks, of himself as an Italian. He is a Neapolitan, a Tuscan, a Piedmontese, a Roman, or a Lombard; and each province thinks that it has the monopoly of honesty, truth, and exemption from crime. All this will, no doubt, pass when education has had time to influence the lower classes; and then also the quaint manners and customs I have attempted to describe will disappear, like the costume of the peasants, which now lingers on only in the meridional provinces.

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THE DOVE OF HOLY SATURDAY

## THE DOVE OF HOLY SATURDAY.

SATURDAY in Holy Week is a great holiday for the Florentines, and still more for the *contadini*, or peasants, of all the country round. They come trooping into the city, all dressed in their holiday clothes, from miles and miles away. The streets are crowded with the easy-going, good-natured, laughter-loving people, who have jokes and proverbs on the tips of their tongues and know full well how to apply them. In old days, spring and summer clothes were always bought on this day, and the shops were decked out displaying their most tempting wares. This custom is a thing of the past, but the *colombina* or dove, still speeds her fiery course down the centre of the old cathedral, and sets fire to the wonderful erection outside the great front door, of squibs, crackers, and catherine wheels which are piled up on an old triumphal chariot, with four clumsy wheels, on the body of which traces of painting may yet be discerned. The dove will fly at midday, but by ten o'clock the environs of the beautiful old marble Duomo are crowded, and from every quarter a never-ceasing stream of people



pours in that direction. Many are the conjectures and the hopes that the dove may fly straight and well, as that indicates a good harvest, an abundant vintage, and a fine crop of olives. There is a tradition though, that in the days of Napoleon I. the Archbishop of Florence and his clergy were threatened with heavy pains and penalties if the dove did not fly well, and that she sped like lightning down the cord in the church, and yet the crops failed. "*Ma chi sa,*" said my informant, "*se e vero? forse nò*" (But who knows if this be true? perhaps not).

By dint of patience and good humour we at last got into the Duomo, which bore quite a changed aspect; every corner being crowded with people, save a narrow line down the centre, from the front door to the high altar, up which the archbishop, attended by all his clergy, was to pass, carrying the sacred fire. To get a chair was a labour of extreme difficulty, and involved an amount of diplomacy impossible to any but a Florentine. The possessor of the chairs was captured, promised many things, and disappeared in an unaccountable manner round the huge pillars. He then reappeared, bearing a pile of chairs, but the crowd separated him from us, and his chairs were seized upon by other applicants. After nine or ten frantic efforts, we got our chairs, much to the amusement of an old *contadino* and his wife, who, with various small grandchildren,



had come to see the *colombina*. The old man had a wrinkled, expressive face, with very bright, acute eyes and iron-grey hair, much such a face as Massacio loved to paint. He looked at us well, and then said in vernacular Tuscan, "*Chi ha pazienza ha i tordi grassi a un quattrin l'uno*" (He who has patience gets the fat thrushes at a farthing apiece).

We were so amused at his apt quotation of an old proverb that we made great friends, and took up his grandchildren on one of our chairs to see the show. The old woman was full of compliments and fears lest the children should be troublesome, but old Carnesecchi, as he told us his name was, had quite the old republican Florentine manners, respectful and civil, but perfectly self-possessed, and valuing his own personality. He invited us to come up to his *podere*, or farm, near Settignano, close to Michel Angelo's house, where, he said, laughing, the air is so *sottile*, so refined, that all the people are geniuses, only the world in general is not disposed to think so.

A stir in the crowd now showed that the Archbishop was coming out of the baptistry of San Giovanni, opposite the cathedral, and all heads turned towards the main door, where we soon saw the great white flag with the red cross, the flag of the people of Florence, come waving in, followed by a long line of white-robed choristers singing. Other flags followed, then the

canons of the cathedral in their picturesque long robes of dark purple, with white fur hoods, and lastly the stately and handsome Archbishop, with a jewelled mitre sparkling on his head, and a *pastorale* in his hand, all chiselled and set with precious stones, made by one of the famous old artificers of the fourteenth century. The Archbishop Limberti, who died of apoplexy soon after this, at the early age of forty-three, was the son of a peasant near Prato; he was handsome and exceedingly dignified in manner, a good scholar, and spoke elegant Italian; beloved and respected by all parties, he filled a difficult post with great ability. Tall, spare, and erect, he came slowly up the centre of the church, blessing the people to the right and the left, as they bowed low before him. When he had passed, they talked with pride of *our* Archbishop, and many stories of his charity and kindness were told in the crowd.

Mass was now said at the high altar, but every one's attention seemed to be concentrated on an unsightly high white post close to the marble balustrade which surrounds the altar. To this post was fixed a cord, which, suspended in mid-air far above the heads of the people, disappeared out of the great front door, and was fastened to the chariot outside the Duomo. A small white speck was seen on the cord, fastened to the pillar, which we were informed was the famous dove. When the *Gloria* had been sung, a man went up a ladder with

a lighted taper, which he applied to the dove. There was a great spitting and hissing, and all at once she shot forward down the cord, a streak of fire and sparks. There was a stir and hum in the crowd, and a few little screams from some of the women ; the dove vanished out of the door, and then there was a series of explosions from outside, while the dove returned as fast as she had gone, and went back to the pillar of wood, where she remained still fizzing for a few seconds.

Then all the bells of Florence, which had been silent since twelve o'clock on Thursday, began to ring merry chimes, and the great organ pealed out a triumphal melody. We made our way out of the Duomo as fast as we could, and were in time to see the last of the fireworks on the chariot ; they made a tremendous noise, but as the sun shone brightly, there was not much to see. The fireworks were piled up some twenty feet high, and arranged in such a manner that only half of them go off in front of the Duomo, the other half being reserved for the corner of Borgo degli Albizzi, where the house of the Pazzi family is situated, in whose honour this custom was originally instituted. When all the squibs and crackers were finished, four magnificent white oxen, gaily decked with ribbons, were harnessed to the car, which moved off slowly with many creaks and groans round the south side of the cathedral towards the Via del Proconsolo. The crowd was immense, so we

took some short cuts down the tortuous narrow streets in this old part of Florence, each of which has some passionate love-story or some dark tale of blood attached to it, and took up a favourable position opposite the entrance to the street of Borgo degli Albizzi, which is too narrow to admit the car.

The four white oxen were unharnessed and taken away, and a cord being put from the door of the Pazzi Palace to the car, another dove again flew to the fireworks, and the popping and fizzing was renewed, to the intense delight of the crowd.

The dove had flown swiftly and well this year, so the *contadini* returned home joyfully, spreading the glad tidings as they went—" *La colombina è andato bene*" (The dove has flown well).

This ceremony is connected with the old and noble family of Pazzi, whose ancestor, Pazzino de' Pazzi, so says the tradition, was the first to scale the walls of Jerusalem and plant the Christian flag. Godfrey de Bouillon, to recompense such prowess, crowned him with a mural crown, gave him his own armorial bearings, five crosses and two dolphins, and bestowed on him three stones, supposed to have come from the Holy Sepulchre. Gamurrini mentions that Pazzino de' Pazzi made a triumphant entry into Florence like a conqueror, in a magnificent chariot, and with a gallant company of youths around to do him honour.

The three stones were deposited in the church of St. Biagio, whence they were removed to Santi Apostoli. On the morning of Holy Saturday, the Archbishop, attended by all his clergy, goes to the church of Santi Apostoli and strikes fire from these stones. He then lights a taper, which is carried in procession to the Baptistry, and then to the Duomo, where the fire is blessed, and the devout light candles at it.

Old records contain no mention of a triumphal entry of any Pazzi, or of a mural crown, and R. Malespina and Monsignor Borghini both agree that the Count of Bari gave the above-mentioned armorial bearings to the Pazzi in 1265. Travellers, too, say that the three stones are of quite a different nature from that of the Holy Sepulchre. They were probably collected on the Mount of Olives by some devout pilgrim of the Pazzi family, who brought them home as relics, and in process of time they have gained the reputation of being portions of the Holy Sepulchre.

The triumphal entry of Pazzino de' Pazzi into Florence, and his supposed progress from the sea-coast to his native city, were favourite subjects with the old painters, chiefly for *cassone* or wedding-chests. I have seen several, good, bad, and indifferent. One of the finest is by Benozzo Gozzoli; Pazzino de' Pazzi is seated in a magnificent gold chariot, with a golden canopy over his head, drawn by two horses, whose



trappings sweep the ground. He is dressed in armour, and a tabard of cloth of gold trimmed with fur; on his head is a kind of turban, surmounted by a crown. Round his chariot are crowds of splendidly dressed youths on horseback, and behind come a troop of men in armour, and another magnificent car with ladies in it; their dresses are of gold brocade and embroidered stuffs, and long veils hang down from their curious head-dresses. One has a turban made of peacock's feathers.

In front of the chariot of Pazzino de' Pazzi is another car, bearing a gilt globe, and on the globe stands a winged golden figure fiddling; round this chariot are trumpeters, from whose long golden trumpets hang square dark-blue flags, on which are emblazoned flames. The procession is opened by a square chariot, bearing an enormous two-handled jar, with two large wings; out of the mouth of the jar issue flames—the sacred fire which Pazzi brought from Jerusalem. This is surrounded by pages on splendidly caparisoned horses, and groups of men in Eastern dress. The background is a walled city with many towers, and a lovely landscape with a river winding through it. People are hawking and hunting in the far distance.

Giovanni Villani, mentioning the claims of the Pazzi to be connected with this festivity, says:—"The blessed fire of Holy Saturday is distributed throughout the city; an inmate from each house goes to light a taper at the



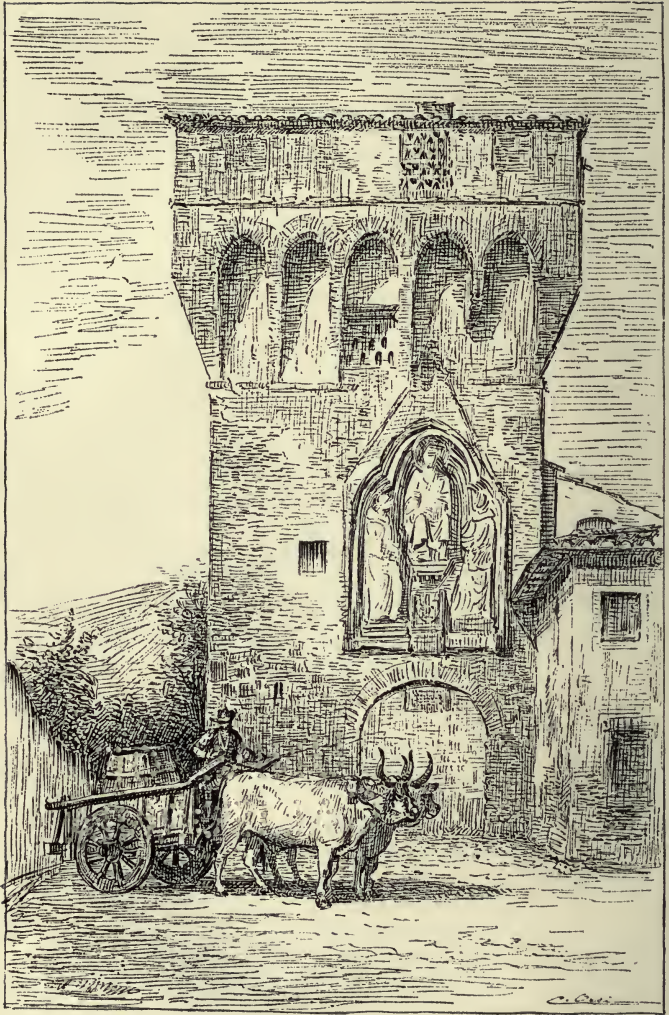
cathedral, and from this solemnity arose great honour to the noble house of Pazzi through one of their ancestors, named Pazzo, who was tall and strong, and could carry a larger fascine of tapers than any one else; he was therefore the first to take the holy fire, and then he distributed it to others."

The use of the car is also explained by the Pazzi family only taking a few tapers at first; in time these were increased in number, and a car was made to carry them. The real origin of the car being forgotten, it was transformed into a trophy, and the tapers into fireworks.

"Tantum ævi longinqua valet mutare vetustas!"



THE  
LAW OF  
CONTRACTS



THE BADIA A SETTIMO.

*A SEPTEMBER DAY IN THE VALLEY  
OF THE ARNO.*

LEAVING Florence by the Porta S. Frediano we drove about four miles to the ancient Badia a Settimo, famous in the political as well as the religious annals of Tuscany. The peasants were as busy as bees, preparing casks and vats for the vintage, and the universal hammering was quite deafening, mingled with the beating out of the *sagina*—a kind of millet much grown for making brooms, which are sent by shiploads to England and America. Most beautiful are the fields of *sagina*; it grows six or seven feet high, the light green leaves bending gracefully to the breeze, and the loose tuft of seed falling like a cascade of chestnut-coloured rain from the tops of the tall stems. To English eyes the wealth of grapes appeared incredible, and the colours marvellous. From maple to maple hung long garlands of vines in fantastic shapes, the *Buon Amico*, or “good friend,” with large loose bunches of purple-black grapes, the *Trebbiano*, brilliant yellow, with the sunny side stained a deep brown, the

*Uva Grassa*, a dull yellow-green, and the lovely *Occhio di Pernice*, or "partridge's eye," of a light pink with ruby lines meandering about in every grape, the flavour of which was quite equal to its beauty. The *contadini* were much amused at our admiration, and insisted on our tasting the various kinds of grapes. Immense golden pumpkins, melons, water-melons, and scarlet tomatoes were being picked, and on some of the farms the women and children were busily employed in making round cakes of the latter fruit, and drying them in the sun for winter consumption. Outside the windows hung branches of the *Acacia horrida*, of which the crown of thorns is said to have been made; each long thorn bearing a crop of skinned figs, the gelatinous, sweet drops of juice oozing out and congealing in the sun's rays. On the low walls surrounding the threshing-floors were flat baskets, boards, and plates, all covered with split peaches and figs drying in the sun, for the children to eat in winter with their bread.

About half-way we crossed the little torrent Greve over a picturesque old bridge, with a pretty little oratory perched on the top. It was built by Pisan prisoners in the days when every Italian city was at deadly feud with its neighbour.

Turning off the high-road to the right, the gate-tower of the Badia a Settimo rose high above the plain, and soon the long, picturesque line of machicolated walls of



what is left of the monastery came into sight. In 940 it was a dependency of the powerful Counts of Borgonuovo, or Fucecchio. Count Lotario enlarged the abbey, which was inhabited by the Cluniacense monks, in 1004. His son, Count Guglielmo Bulgaro, was a munificent patron, and among other possessions gave them the church of San Salvatore, in the Apennines, with the vast territory of Stale (hospice), as a hermitage for those monks who desired to retire from the world. Stale in after-times was raised to a countship, and in the fourteenth century was an apple of discord between Bologna and Florence. Count Guglielmo was a friend of St. John Gualberto, and asked him to reform the monastery of Settimo, where abuses and evil customs of all sorts had taken root; and until his death, in 1073, the saintly abbot of Vallombrosa reigned supreme, and introduced his own rule. It was here by his order that St. Peter Igneus, in 1068, went through the ordeal of fire, in the presence of an immense concourse of people. The following inscriptions still exist attesting the fact:—

“ Igneus hic Petrus medios pertransiit ignes,  
Flammarum victor, sed magis haereseos.”

“ Hoc in loco, miraculo S. Joannis Gualberti, quidam fuere confutati Haeretici. MLXX.”

A considerable portion of the Laurentian codes was executed about this time in the Badia a Settimo, bought by the Medicis afterwards for a large sum, for their library

in Florence : the monks were also famous agriculturists and hydraulic engineers.

Emperors and popes took the abbey under their protection, and, in 1236, Gregory IX. gave it to the Cistercians, and declared it to be under the immediate protection of the Holy See. The exemplary life of the new inhabitants of the monastery so gained the esteem of the public that the Signory of Florence confided to them the administration of the taxes, the maintenance of the city walls and the bridges, the construction of the castles and fortified places in the Florentine district, and finally declared them keepers of the great seal. The large possessions of the abbey served as a guarantee, and the monks were exempt from all taxes to the state ; how considerable their revenue must have been is proved by the large sum each abbot paid on investiture to the Court of Rome—a thousand golden florins. Various mills were erected by them on the banks of the Arno ; but the weirs and locks interfered with navigation, and caused such serious inundations that, in 1385, the Republic of Florence ordered their demolition.

The abbey suffered so much during the siege of Florence in 1529 that Paul IV. permitted the abbot and the greater part of his monks to migrate to the monastery of Cestello, near Porta Pinti, which had belonged to them since 1442. Tradition assigns the campanile, a hundred and eleven feet high, a model of elegance, to the munificent

Count Guglielmo. At the base it is round, about half way up it becomes hexagonal, with small machicolations at the summit, and a pyramidical roof. Vasari, in his life of Niccolò Pisano, attributes this lovely bell-tower to the famous Pisan architect, who was certainly consulted about alterations to the church, and in fact it resembles the well-known campanile of San Niccolò at Pisa.

On approaching the Badia a Settimo, the tall gate-tower is most imposing, with its machicolations and the curious large alto-relievo of our Lord and two saints, built in brick and mortar, and evidently of great antiquity. There are still traces of painted angels' heads in the niche containing the figures. Below the feet of Christ is a stone, bearing the lily of Florence and an illegible inscription; under that again is a marble slab with "Anno Domini MCCXXXVI S. S. Dmn. N. Gregorius IX. dedit hoc Monasterium de Septimo Ordin. Cisterc. cum esset liberum et exemptum ab omni regio patronatu, quod in plena libertate a dicto Ordine pacifice possidetur."

This tower was connected in old times with the fortress-like walls with which the Republic of Florence surrounded the monastery after the inroads of the Pisans under Giovanni Acuto (Sir John Hawkwood), in 1371. There were three other towers, and a broad walk all round the top of the walls, which were also defended by a moat, and each tower had a drawbridge. How im-

posing the Badia must have been in those days before the Arno had deposited over fifteen feet of mud, which conceals so much of the ancient structure! Now the monastery is a private villa, and the cloisters, with their slender columns and beautifully carved capitals, resound to the pitter-patter of children's feet and the joyous laughter of young girls. The refectory of the monks, more than half-buried, has been divided into various cellars, and the fine old abbey church, with its solemn, antediluvian-looking columns, is the *tinaia* where the wine is made. Huge vats are ranged round the walls, and the lithe, brown-limbed *contadini* tread the foaming must, and sing their gay *stornelli*, where the black-robed monks once chanted hymns and psalms. One can judge of the original height of the building by one column which is excavated to its base, and of which there is much less above than underground.

The present church was built at right angles to the ancient edifice, and nearer the campanile in the thirteenth century. Round the choir runs a pretty frieze of the school of Luca della Robbia, four winged angels' heads alternating with the kneeling lamb holding a banner, emblem of the guild of wool manufacturers. The high altar is a magnificent specimen of *pietra dura* work, and Giovanni di San Giovanni used his facile brush in 1629 to great effect in the left-hand chapel, where is a small marble Ambrey (or receptacle for the holy oil), by

Desiderio da Settignano, which is a perfect jewel. Above the altar of this chapel, behind painted doors, is kept a large silver casket containing the bones of St. Quentin, whose story was related in a most graphic manner by the priest's nephew, a small boy of about thirteen. He demurred to showing us the reliquary, as it entailed fetching two keys and lighting all the candles; but he informed us that St. Quentin was beheaded in Paris a thousand years ago. By a miracle his body was transported to a church on the opposite side of the Arno, which, however, the saint did not like, so the silver chest floated across the river, and in 1187 was brought to the Badia a Settimo, and deposited in the centre of the church in front of the high altar. "Ma non ci volle stare, pover uomo" (but he would not remain, poor fellow), continued our informant, "and every morning the monks found him in this chapel; and so here he is, but without his head, for he could not find it when he left Paris. However, the box is full of bones," and the boy moved his two arms up and down as though violently shaking in imagination the remains of the poor saint, to make them rattle. As the present church, with St. Quentin's chapel, dates several hundred years later than the finding of the silver casket, we may be allowed to place a note of interrogation against the powers of migration of the headless saint.

To the right of the high altar is the ancient Spini



chapel, which must have been detached from the original church, like the Cappella degli Spagnuoli in Sta. Maria Novella at Florence, and been entered from the cloisters. There are still dim traces of the frescoes by Buffalmacco. Now the chapel is like a cavern, as the deposit of the river has raised the surface of the ground to such a degree that the spring of the arches nearly touches the floor. There is an inscription setting forth that this chapel was built for the soul of Lapi des Spinis, in 1315.

High banks and dykes now keep the Arno in some control, but the tremendous flood of 1844 filled the chapel to the roof with muddy water, and completed the ruin of three or four fine pictures which were in the sacristy, and are now in the Uffizzi gallery at Florence undergoing restoration, if possible. The peasants near by had to take their bullocks and horses up into the bedrooms to save them from drowning. It seems that the poor beasts went upstairs willingly enough, "but all the king's horses and all the king's men" could not get them down again, so that in some instances the oxen had to be slaughtered and carried down piecemeal.

We were informed by the priest that even the present church had been built high above the level of the ground, and was approached by a flight of steps, now deep under the earth. The bases of the pillars which support the *loggia* in front of the church are more than



half-buried, and some tombs which were let into the walls have disappeared. The cenotaph of the Countess Gasdia, wife of the great Count Guglielmo Bulgaro, with a laudatory inscription, is still to be seen, with an inscription above recording the burial of the Countess Cilla, her daughter-in-law, who died in 1096. It must have been placed in its present position, to the right of the church door, when the ancient abbey-church was abandoned.

Passing through the village of San Colombano we drove along pretty country lanes, the hedges all glowing with the scarlet berries of the orange thorn, and the trees clothed in vines, towards Lastra a Signa. At one farm they had begun the vintage; men, women, and children were busily occupied, the men on ladders cutting down the *pendice* (two vine canes twisted carefully together in the early spring, with the eyes turned outwards), the women picking off all the leaves, which serve as fodder for the cattle. The finest *pendice* are hung up inside the *loggia*, which almost invariably adorns a Tuscan farmhouse, in order to dry the grapes gradually for colouring and strengthening the wine after the first fermentation. The stately white oxen were chewing the cud, and the red ox-cart with a large vat tied on, and the wooden *bigoncia*, all stained with the red vine juice, looked most Bacchanalian. A handsome young *contadino* came along at a swinging trot with a *bigoncia* poised

on one shoulder, in which the purple and yellow grapes were piled high. How Cesare Benozzo—for that, he told us, was his name—ever managed to carry so inconvenient a thing without intense suffering we could not make out. The contents of the *bigoncia* were emptied with a thud and a splash into the vat, which, when full, went creaking and groaning slowly home to the *tinaia*, where the grapes were transferred to the larger vats after being well crushed.

The medieval machicolated walls and towers, and the old gateways of Lastra a Signa are intact. A fortified castle, called Gangalandi, was erected in 1226 to defend the road to Pisa (after the destruction of the ancient fortress of Monte Orlando in 1107), which was taken and burnt by the Pisans, aided by their English auxiliaries, in 1364.

With proverbial astuteness the Florentines contrived some years later to bribe Giovanni Acuto (Sir John Hawkwood), the famous *condottiere*, who left his Pisan masters and entered their service. His portrait, on his war-horse, is over the right-hand door of the cathedral of Florence, painted by Paolo Uccello in *terra verde*, in 1436. The action of the horse of the "Incliti Militis Domini Joannis Aguti" has given rise to endless discussion among mathematicians and philosophers of the Renaissance, which are amusing enough. He is evidently ambling, so that Paolo Uccello is unjustly called *pictor*

*ineptus* by one of these learned scholars for making the horse raise the two off-legs simultaneously.

Sir John Hawkwood was the most famous of the *condottieri*, or captains of free bands in the fourteenth century; he crossed the Alps in 1361, and his first feat of arms in Italy was to take prisoner the "Green Count" of Savoy, at Cirié, a small town of Piedmont. He was an Essex yeoman, the born vassal of John de Vere, seventh Earl of Oxford, with whom he seems to have made the campaign in France in 1343. In 1376 Pope Gregory XI. bestowed on him the two castles of Cotignola and Bagnacavallo, near Faenza, the earliest instance on record of the grant of a sovereign fief by any Italian potentate to an alien. Some of Hawkwood's letters still existing at Mantua bear various signatures, thus: "Johannes Haukutd, Hauchbod, Haubchod, Hauchwod, Hauhcunod, Haucud." The name "Acuto," by which the great *condottiere* is known in Italian history, and which is inscribed on his tomb at Florence, would scarcely have been identified with Hawkwood, if Villani had not recorded that in English it signified "*Falcone in Bosco*" (Hawk in a wood).

Lastra a Signa was rebuilt in 1377 by the Republic of Florence, according to the advice of Sir John Hawkwood, and twenty years later the unfortunate little town was invested and taken by Alberigo, captain of Galeazzo Visconti, Lord of Milan, who was at deadly feud with the

Signory. Again the walls were restored ; and in 1529, when the imperialists besieged Florence, Francesco Ferrucci, whose headquarters were at Empoli, five miles down the river, garrisoned Lastra a Signa with some of his bravest troops. The Prince of Orange sent a strong force of Spaniards with scaling-ladders to take the place, who were repulsed with considerable loss ; but munitions ran short in the fortress, and while negotiations were going on, five hundred more Spanish lances arrived with battering-rams, effected an entrance on the south-east side, and cut the gallant defenders to pieces.

There is nothing remarkable in the village, save a picturesque *loggia*, still bearing traces of lavish decoration, which was part of the hospital for pilgrims once existing inside the walls. It has been barbarously maltreated ; part is now a theatre, the rest is carpenters' shops. The population is squalid and miserable enough, and it does not bear a good name, they are mostly employed in plaiting, sewing, and ironing straw hats, and the clatter of the hopper used for sorting the straw is incessant. The so-called Leghorn hats are all plaited in the lower Val d'Arno, and before the introduction of the cheap Japanese reed hats the women earned so much that the men did not think it worth while to work, and spent their time in gambling and loitering. Straw hats have diminished so much in price that a woman barely gains threepence a day, unless she is very expert, and can do the finest plait

with fifteen or more straws, or is clever enough to invent a new pattern.

Skirting the fine walls we turned to the left, opposite the Portone del Baccio, the southern gate-tower of Lastra a Signa, now used as a prison, and followed the old Pisan road, up the valley of Rimaggio, to see the castle of Malmantile, some two and a half miles hence. The monastery of St. Lucia crowns the hill on our right, built where the fortress of Monte Orlando once stood; in the quiet convent garden under the solemn cypresses are still some fragments of the ancient walls of the castle, the last stronghold of the great Counts of Fucecchio in this neighbourhood, destroyed by the Florentines in 1107.

The road to Malmantile following the little stream of Rimaggio, is beautiful; steep hillsides clothed with heather and pines, patches of cyclamen and the autumn crocus, or colchicum, glowing in the sunlight, while last year's leaves of the Christmas roses were yellow, bright brown, and almost black, and shaggy goats climbing among the jutting rocks formed a picture worthy of the brush of Salvator Rosa.

We passed four water-mills, and then, perched on a well-wooded knoll, with jagged rocks and a tangled undergrowth of honeysuckle, heather, and brambles, whose leaves were turning red and purple, saw the farmhouse of St. Antonio, which must in old times have been a fortress, dominating the valley. It is picturesque



enough, all corners, angles, and arches, with a grey tower, now the home of numerous pigeons

“Cooing all their sweet love-ditties  
As their white wings flap or fold.”

Two mutilated angels in terra-cotta, apparently of the school of Verrocchio, keep watch and ward over the farmhouse in niches on either side of an archway. A pleasant-looking old *contadina* was washing on the *aja* (threshing-floor), and asking her about the angels, she told us with some pride that a chapel existed where mass was said once a year for the dead who were buried there.

“It has always been here—at least, when I say always, for 1382 years,” said she, counting the centuries on her fingers as though they were *centimes*; “and that is always, is it not, signora?”

We went in to see the chapel which has been modernized, but on lifting a stained and faded curtain of blue calico which covered the wall behind the altar, we saw a very fine ancient fresco, evidently by a master hand of the early fifteenth century. St. Antonio is seated in the middle, with God the Father above, and on either side stand three life-size saints. St. Stephen next the window was particularly beautiful, with a sweet, solemn face one was never tired of looking upon. The old woman of course knew nothing of the history of either house or fresco, save that it was *roba antica* (old stuff), and that



her *padrone* had put the curtain because the saints were *schifoso* (dirty). He had intended repainting them, but artists were people without any conscience, or else their colours cost a lot of money ; so the blue calico had been bought as a way out of the difficulty. Fortunately the pot of whitewash had not been thought of !

A little higher up the view is lovely. The valley we had just left forms a perfect V, with the grey tower and picturesque arches of St. Antonio rising in the very centre, like a watch-dog set to guard the pass ; further down, the long line of the monastery of St. Lucia is perched on the brow of the hill to the left, and the background is formed by the broad plain of the Arno, bathed in a golden mist, while Monte Morello, at whose foot lies Doccia, the china manufactory of the Ginori family, makes a violet-grey mass in the far distance.

Another hill, and the castle of Malmantile is seen crowning the very summit, and standing out against the blue sky in solitary grandeur. The view thence is extensive and imposing ; the barren, rolling hills seem endless as we look over the Val di Pesa, and far-off St. Miniato al Tedesco

“ lifts to heaven  
Her diadem of towers.”

“ Risiede Malmantile sopra un poggetto :  
E chiunque verso lui volta le ciglia,  
Dice che i fondatori ebber concetto  
Di fabbricar’ l’ottava maraviglia.

L'ampio paese poi, che egli ha soggetto  
 Non si sa (vo' giocare) a mille miglia :  
 Ve l'aria buona, azzurra óltramarina :  
 E non vi manca latte di gallina."

"Malmantile is placed on a hillock, and whoso turns his eyes that way will say that the founders were minded to make the eighth wonder of the world. The vast territory subject to the castle is not known (I bet) for a thousand miles round. There is excellent air and a blue sky, and even the milk of hens is not wanting."

Thus writes Lorenzo Lippi in his *Il Malmantile Racquistato*, the mock-heroic poem, dear to every Tuscan, which has made the old castle celebrated. Few other people would have the patience to wade through 428 pages, full of not only Tuscanisms, but Florentinisms, if I may coin the word. The painter, famous for his wit and power of repartee, used to stay in a villa near by with his friend Alessandro Valori, and employed his leisure hours in writing the poem on Malmantile, which word signifies a worn-out tablecloth; the proper names in the poem are nearly all anagrams, more or less witty, and the allegory seems to point the moral that those who lead a life of feasting and gaiety generally die on a dung-hill. The proverb, *Andare a Malmantile* (Going to Malmantile), is used as a gibe against avaricious persons who do not give their friends enough to eat.

From the archives in Florence we learn that on the

5th of May, 1424, "The Most Honourable Ten, overseers of the city, and of the districts of Pisa, Pistoja, Volterra, and other places, made a statement to the Signory of Florence that the castle of Malmantile di Selva was unfinished and a discredit to the noble Republic, as well as a danger; so on the 16th of September of the same year a contract was signed and sealed between the Honourable Ten and Piero di Curradino, and Ambruogio di Lionardo, master masons, before the Florentine notary, Antonio di Puccino di Ser Andrea. The *maestri* undertook to finish the castle with machicolations and towers similar to those of Lastra a Signa, and also to make a deep ditch round the fortress."

There is a tradition that Malmantile was unsuccessfully besieged by the Prince of Orange and his Spaniards, but I can find no confirmation of it.

The old castle is in ruins, and wretched hovels, which have sprung up like mushrooms, are tacked on to the walls. The people are miserably poor, but smiling and pleasant; on our admiring the singing of a pretty girl, whose blue cotton frock was better made than those of her companions, her mother said, with evident pride, but with an accent which tried to be disapproving, "*Si, è come il cuculo, tutto voce and penne*" (Yes, she is like the cuckoo, all voice and feathers), which we thought was apt enough.

The sun was declining, and the *civetta* (passerine

owl) was beginning to utter its melancholy cry, so with a last look at the picturesque old ruin we turned our horses' heads towards the City of Flowers, and drove home.

“The skies yet blushing with departed light,  
When falling dews with spangles deck the glade,  
And the low sun had lengthen'd every shade.”

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POPULAR SONGS OF TUSCANY



## POPULAR SONGS OF TUSCANY.

“*La gentil Toscana*,” as her friends lovingly call her, is certainly the land of song. Every one sings, from the highest to the lowest, and all can join in the chorus of the popular *stornelli*—born, one knows not where—which crop up every spring with the flowers, and every autumn with the ripening grapes. It is difficult to get the people to sing their *rispetti* or *stornelli* for you. They will not believe that any one can care for their *roba antica*, or old stuff; and as to repeating the words—“*Questa va in canto in discorso non si può dire*” (This does for singing, but one cannot say the words), will be their answer. The peasants, the bricklayers, carpenters, etc., generally sing at their work, and the *stornello* particularly is pressed into every variety of service. The lover serenades his mistress with burning words of love; the disappointed suitor, as he passes the house of his successful rival, or of the faithless fair one, insults or upbraids with a *stornello*; two women quarrel—they instantly begin to *stornellare* each other, ridiculing personal defects, or voiding family quarrels in the choicest Tuscan.

The *rispetto* is, almost without exception, a love-song in six, eight, or ten lines. The music is melancholy, often in the minor key, and some of the old airs are like a recitative, the end notes being drawn out as long as possible; some of them sound very like Eastern airs.

How it is that no musician has ever taken the trouble to note down the music of the *real* popular songs, I cannot imagine. Gordigiani, Campani, Palloni, and many other *maestri* have composed music to the old words, or to modern imitations of them, but their *rispetti* and *stornelli* are very unlike the genuine thing. The old airs are difficult to catch, and still more difficult to note; but I have succeeded in making a considerable collection, some from the peasants in the country, some from friends, and others from hackney coachmen, masons, etc., in Florence. The inhabitants of the San Frediano and San Nicolò quarters of the town are reckoned the best singers, and a guitar is to be seen in nearly every house on the southern, or unfashionable side of the Arno. New songs are composed by the people every year, and on fine summer nights one often meets a silent crowd of one or two hundred people following three or four men with guitars, and perhaps a flute. You ask an explanation. "*E Oreste che canta*" (It is Oreste who is singing) is the answer. Some of them have beautiful voices and sing wonderfully well. I know of a young mason with a tenor voice who was offered £400 a year—a large sum

in Florence—if he would learn to sing for the stage ; but he preferred his liberty, and refused. As the singers pass slowly through the streets, you hear the noise of opening windows far ahead, and occasionally a loud “bene!” or “bravo!” comes from above, generally acknowledged by the little band stopping a few minutes to finish their song. One of the well-known singers in Florence at the present moment unites the incongruous occupations of a butcher and a flower vendor. In winter he kills oxen and lambs, and in summer he sells flowers. When he sleeps I know not, as he sings nearly all night long in the different people’s *cafés* and in the streets with his companions.

G. Tigri, one of the most elegant among modern writers, has made an excellent collection of the words of *stornelli* and *rispetti*. The *rispetto* may be defined as a respectful (*rispettoso*) salutation from a lover to his mistress, or *vice versâ*. The following is an example :—

“Vi vengo a salutare, rosa gentile,  
 Vera delizia del giardin d’amore.  
 Decco qua il vostro servo umile e vile,  
 Chi v’a donato la sua vita e il cuore.  
 A voi s’inclina reverente e umile,  
 Come si deve a un fedel servitore ;  
 Però ti prego, rosa colorita,  
 Sarai cagion ch’io perderò la vita?”

(“I come to greet thee, gentle rose, that solely  
 The true delight of love’s fair garden art :

Look down upon thy slave, so poor and lowly,  
 Who hath to thee given up his life and heart.  
 To thee he bows him down in reverence holy,  
 Fulfilling so a faithful servant's part ;  
 But yet I pray thee, rose of brightest hues,  
 Wouldst thou be cause that I my life should lose? ')

Here is a charming description of the seven beauties a woman ought to possess :—

“ Sette bellezze vuol' aver la donna :  
 Prima—che bella si possa chiamare ;  
 Alta dev' esser senza la pianella,  
 E bianca e rossa senza su' lisciare ;  
 Larga di spalla e stretta in cinturella ;  
 La bella bocca, e il bel nobil parlare.  
 Se poi si tira su le bionde trecce,  
 Decco la donna di sette bellezze.”

(“ The perfect woman should have beauties seven :  
 Before she have the right to be called fair—  
 Tall she should be, without her slippers even ;  
 Of red and white in which paint claims no share.  
 To shoulders broad a thin waist should be given ;  
 From sweet lips, sweet and noble speech must fare :  
 If, besides these, she should be golden-tressed,  
 Behold the maid with the seven beauties blessed !”)

Again, the lover hears the moon lamenting the loss of two of her stars. She complains to Cupid, and refuses to remain in the sky :—

“ La luna s'è venuta a lamentare,  
 Inde la faccia del divino Amore ;  
 Dice che in cielo non ci vuol più stare ;  
 Che tolto gliel' avete lo splendore.  
 E si lamenta, e si lamenta forte ;  
 L' ha conto le sue stelle, non son tutte.

E gliene manca due, e voi l' avete ;  
 Son que' du' occhi che in fronte tenete !”

(“The moon has come to make her lamentation ;  
 Before the face of Cupid she doth bend her :  
 No more i' the sky, she says, she'll hold her station,  
 Because that you have robbed her of her splendour.  
 And still her loud lament on this doth bear,  
 That when she counts her stars, all are not there.  
 There are two missing—and the theft is thine :  
 They are the two eyes in thy face that shine.”)

Generally speaking, the last two lines of the *rispetto* are repetitions in altered words of the two former ones. It is difficult to render the tender grace, the perfect simplicity, and the purity of language and of style, in a translation. The peasants, shepherds, and charcoal-burners of the Pistoian mountains speak to this day the Italian, or rather the Tuscan, of the great poets. They read Tasso in the winter nights, sitting round the big open fireplace ; the scholar of the house reads aloud ; and the verse of the gentle poet may perhaps live longer under the fir-trees of the Apennines than upon the lagunes of Venice. The children learn long passages by heart, and the recognized declaration of love by a young peasant is his singing the *ottave rime* of Tasso under the window of the girl he purposes to court with a view to marriage. The songs which come from the mountains are not more remarkable for the beauty of their language than for their delicacy and the respect for women which they breathe. Thus :—

“Se dormi, o se non dormi, viso adorno,  
 Alza la bionda e delicata testa—  
 Ascolta lo tuo amor che tu hai d’ intorno,  
 Dice che tu ti affacci alla finestra ;  
 Ma non ti dice che tu vada fuora,  
 Perchè la notte è cosa dionesta :  
 Facciati alla finestra, e stanne in casa,  
 Perch’io sto fuora, e fo—l’ inserenata.  
 Facciati alla finestra, e stanne dentro,  
 Perch’io sto fuora, e faccio un gran lamento.”

(“Sleep’st thou, or wak’st thou, sweet face of my dearest?  
 Lift that fair head in all its delicate beauty—  
 List to the love that to thy heart sits nearest—  
 He tells thee that to look out is thy duty :  
 But tells thee not to come out in the gloaming,  
 For night is not the time for maiden’s roaming :  
 But look out from the casement of thy chamber,  
 Because I stand and sing, nor think to clamber.  
 Look from thy casement—to this prayer consenting,  
 Because I stand without, and make a great lamenting.”)

In autumn there is a considerable emigration of the able-bodied men from the hills above Pistoia and the country round Siena to the Maremma, to find work. They push on as far as Elba, Corsica, and Sardinia, where they are employed as miners, wood-cutters, charcoal-burners, and road-makers. But the love they bear to their Apennines never waxes dim, and they generally keep together in bands from the same village or district. In spring they return with their carefully hoarded earnings to their families. This yearly wandering has given rise to many of their songs. The following is the parting song of a young lover to his sweetheart :—



“Quando che mi partii dal mi’ paese,  
 Lasciai piangendo la mi’ innamorata,  
 Et l’ era tanto bella e si cortese,  
 Chi prese a domandar della tornata.  
 E gli risposi con poche parole :  
 La tornata sarà quando Dio vuole ;  
 E gli risposi con parole umile :  
 La tornata sarà fra maggio e aprile !”

(“When from my village I was boun’ for starting,  
 I parted from my love with salt tears burning,  
 So fair and courteous in that hour of parting  
 Was she, she questioned me of my returning,  
 And I made brief reply to my heart’s treasure,  
 That my return would be at God’s good pleasure ;  
 And I made her reply, in humble way,  
 I would return ’twixt April-tide and May.”)

The girl whose lover has gone sings :—

“Come faranno i mi’ occhi beati  
 A star lontan da voi cinque o sei mesi ?  
 Come faranno, che so’ innamorati ?  
 A noia gli verran queste paesi :  
 A noia gli verran questi contorni :  
 Sempre pregherò l’ ciel che tu ritorni.  
 A noia gli verran cheste giornate :  
 Sempre pregherò l’ ciel che ritorniate.”

(“What will these eyes do, late so blest in seeing,  
 With my love from me five or six months parted ?  
 What will they do, to whom love was their being ?  
 How will they loathe the hamlet whence he started,  
 The country round about how they’ll be spurning !  
 My constant prayer shall be for thy returning.  
 How heavily the days will pass, alack !  
 The while I pray Heaven for thy coming back.”)

Her lover replies :—

“Tornerò, tornerò, non dubitare,  
 Caro mio bene, non aver paura,  
 Che a breve tempo mi vedrai tornare :  
 Che impresa porto ognor la tua figura.  
 Allor ti cesserò, bella, d’ amare,  
 Quando morto sarò in sepoltura.”

(“I’ll return, I’ll return ; fear not that, my own dearie,  
 With never a doubt let thy heart be distressed,  
 That after brief absence again I’ll be near thee,  
 And till then thy face I bear stamped on my breast,  
 Nor e’er will I cease in my heart’s core to wear thee,  
 Till dead in the cold of the tomb I’m at rest.”)

A number of the letters written during these long absences are in rhyme, either composed by the young people themselves, or, if they cannot write, by the village poet, who has a large custom, and for a few pence writes the letter in prose or in verse, and even paints some fitting symbol on the first page—such as a heart transfixed by a dart, two hearts bound by a chain, two vases of flowers, or two wreaths. Some of these letters have been collected and printed by G. Tigri and by Tommaseo. Those which invoke the aid of the swallow are particularly pretty, begging the bird who comes from the sea to stay her flight, and to give the disconsolate lover a feather from her lovely wing, wherewith to write to his love a golden letter ; promising to give back the amorous feather to the swallow, and begging her to carry the letter safely to his lady love. Another complains that he tried to write the name he loves, but the pen was so full of melancholy and the inkstand of sorrow, that

he never could succeed, adding that if the waters of the sea were ink, the earth paper, and all the grass that grows on it pens, he would still need more sheets of paper to tell the immensity of his love.

Many of the phrases and comparisons in these letters are taken from the old *rispetti* and *stornelli*, which every peasant learns by heart as a child, together with the proverbs in which Tuscany is so rich. Some, again, have doubtless descended for generations, and the lover has only to change a name, and the colour of the hair and eyes, to make his letter suitable. Others are descriptions of the Maremma and of the work doing, or of Rome, the "city of eternal beauty."

The *rispetti* have a likeness to the ancient *strambotti* (derived from Strani Motti), which used to be sung in Sicily in Manfred's time, and I believe that in some parts of Tuscany the peasants still use the latter name for their songs. They were successfully imitated by Pulci, Poligiani, and Lorenzo the Magnificent, some of whose sonnets are even now popular.

In the villages the old custom of *andare a veglia* still exists. At nightfall the young men go in companies to houses where there are young girls, to sing and dance; some of their dances are accompanied by songs, such as *La Galletta* and *La Veneziana*. The dancers sing two lines, and the musician then plays the *ricordino*, or *intercalare*, a sort of quick *refrain*, generally in the minor

key, while the young people dance round him in couples. The following are favourite words to these dance airs :—

“ La bella ballerina è entrata in ballo,  
 Mirala un po' come la balla bene !  
 Mirala al collo\*se le' ci ha il corallo ;  
 La bella ballerina è entrata in ballo.  
 Mirala al petto se le' ci ha il bel fiore ;  
 La bella ballerina è col suo amore.  
 Mirala in dito se le' ci ha il diamante ;  
 La bella ballerina è col suo amante,  
 Mirala in petto se le' ci ha la rosa ;  
 La bella ballerina è fatta sposa.”

(“ The graceful dancer hath come to the dancing.  
 Look at her—only look—how well she dances !  
 Look at her neck, what coral on it glancing !  
 The graceful dancer hath come to the dancing.  
 Look at her breast, how sweet a flower is there !  
 The graceful dancer now is with her dear.  
 Look at her hand, which rings of diamond cover ;  
 The graceful dancer now is with her lover.  
 Look, how her rosy breast the roses hide,  
 The graceful dancer hath become a bride.”)

Other dances, as the *Trescone*, the *Villan di Spagna*, the *Manfrina*, the *Marina*, the *Contraddanza*, the *Bergamasca*, the *Paesana*, the *Milordina*, the *Moresca*, etc., have each their peculiar air, but no words ; except the *Vita d' oro*, when the man sings on ceasing to dance :—

“ O vita d' oro, vita d' argento !  
 Dammi la mano, chè son contento !”

(“ Oh, life of golden, life of silver store !  
 Give me thy hand, and I will ask no more.”)

The ancient custom of going round and serenading the young girls on the last night of April still lingers in some Tuscan villages. The old Florentine writers describe the splendid festivals in town and country for the *Calen di Maggio*, and the songs called *Maggi*. The peasants in out-of-the-way villages still plant a branch of some flowering shrub before the doors of their sweethearts, or carry a kind of Maypole, *Maiò*, adorned with fresh flowers and lemons, and sing in chorus, while the lover presents a small nosegay to his mistress :—

“Or è di maggio, e fiorito è il limone ;  
 Noi salutiamo di casa il padrone.  
 Ora è di maggio, e gli è fiorito i rami ;  
 Salutiam le ragazze co' suoi dami.  
 Ora è di maggio, che fiorito è i fiori ;  
 Salutiam le ragazze co' suoi amore.”

(“ May-day is come—the lemon is in flower :  
 Greet we the house-master, in happy hour.  
 Now it is May, and blooms on boughs are hoar :  
 We greet each maiden and her bachelor.  
 Now May is come—earth its flower-carpet covers :  
 Our greeting to the young girls and their lovers.”)

Till within a few years ago the young people of both sexes used to join together in companies on the evening of the 1st of May, and serenade their friends, or the *padrone*, or any other benefactor they wished to honour. They improvised *stornelli* and *rispetti* to the accompaniment of a violin, a guitar or two, and a tambourine, and wore bunches of gay-coloured silk ribbons on their hats

and on their shoulders. The following is a serenade to a young married couple, probably the *padrone* and his young bride :—

“ Alzando gli occhi al cielo veddi il sole  
 Accompagnato da una chiara stella,  
 Che sotto gli occhi miei faceva splendore :  
 Non ho mai visto una coppia si bella.  
 Scusin, signori, s’io ho fatto errore  
 Colla mia rozza semplice favella.  
 Colà verdeggia una fiorita rosa,  
 Donna gentile, delicata sposa :  
 Pregherò sempre la divina Madre,  
 Che faccia vi figlio che somigli il padre ! ”

(“ I raised mine eyes to heaven, the sun was glowing,  
 With but one star beside his course so fair,  
 That as I looked its splendour still seemed growing.  
 Never a couple have I seen so rare.  
 But pardon, signors, if I, all unknowing,  
 Have erred in this my speech so poor and bare ;  
 So blooms a rose, the flower of summer-tide,  
 As does this gentle dame, this dainty bride ;  
 Still will I pray to our sweet Lady-Mother,  
 A son to send as his sire such another.”)

When any one begins to sing *stornelli* (derived probably from the word *storno*, which means to send back or re-echo), he generally starts with an invitation or defiance, to induce his companions to reply to his song. In the old times the accepted term was *Ecce*, and the answer, *Cominci* (begin). It was thus Burchiello, the celebrated barber of the Via Calimara, where the rich cloth merchants of Florence had their shops, used to challenge



his friends to sing. Such men as Filippo Brunelleschi, who built the dome of the cathedral of Florence; Luca della Robbia, and his family; Orcagna, and his scholars; Lorenzo Ghiberti, who made the doors of the Baptistry—doors, said Michael Angelo, worthy of Paradise—were the friends of Burchiello. Gifted with a fine voice and feeling for music, with a biting tongue and ready wit, the barber's songs were the terror of his enemies and the delight of the people. To this day a certain class of songs are called *burchielleschi*.

Near the church of Santa Croce, where Simone Memmi and Giotto loved to work, was the beautiful Fabbrini garden, famous for its orange trees—so famous, that a street near was called "Canto agli Aranci" (Corner of the Oranges); and here it was that the *improvisatori* most loved to congregate and challenge each other to improvise to the guitar on any theme given by the bystanders. A certain Cristoforo, a Florentine, surnamed "l'Altissimo" (the Supreme), was a renowned *improvvisatore* about 1480. Another *improvvisatore* of note was a secretary of the Republic, by name Bernardo Ascolti. Lorenzo dei Medici was celebrated both for his skill as a musician and as an *improvvisatore*, and used to sing with a friend surnamed "Cardiere," who bore him a good second. In 1600, Doni says that singing in the open air, in gardens and cool places, was most popular in Florence; and there existed a society of *letterati* who

had raised the art of improvising in verse to the guitar to such a height that Leo X. gave them the permission to grant the title of poet, and a laurel crown, to any one they considered worthy of such honour.

As late as 1725, Bernardino Perfetti, a Sieneſe, was crowned as an *improvisatore* at Rome, in the Campidoglio; and in 1776, Maddalena Morelli, of Pistoja, surnamed "Corinna Olimpica," achieved the ſame diſtinction for her wonderful power of improvisation. She had the additional honour of ſuggeſting a heroine to Madame de Staël. Many women have been famous for the grace of their language and beauty of voice; and even in theſe proſaic times there are a few left, whoſe improvising can rouse large audiences to enthuſiaſm.

But to return to the *stornello*: it conſiſts either of three lines of equal length, or of a ſhort invocation or exclamation, and two lines by way of concluſion. The following is in common uſe as a *stornello* to ſtart with, though the ſinger often improvizes a polite defiance ſuited to his company:—

"E io delli ſtornelli ne ſo tanti!  
Ce n'ho da caricar ſei baſtimenti—  
Chi ne vuol profitar ſi faccia avanti!"

("Of catches I know ſo many, ſo many—  
Enough, I ſwear, ſix ſhips to load!  
Step forward, ſtep forward—who'd have any!")

At the end of all the *stornelli*, and of a few of the *rispetti*, there is a kind of *refrain*, or chorus, called a

*rifiorita*, or *passa gallo* (cock's walk), sometimes with words, sometimes without. The following is a favourite air for the *stornello a fiore*, so called because it must begin with the invocation of a flower or blossom:—

*Adagio.* . . . . *più presto.*



Fior di li - mo - ne! Li - mon-e è a - gro e  
non si puol man - gia - re, Li - mo-ne è a - gro e  
non si puol man - gia - re, Ma son più a - gre  
(RIFIORITA.)  
le pe - ne d'a - mo - re. Sei bel - li - na, lo  
sen - to, lo so, Port' i cap - pel - li alla roc - co - co!

(Other RIFIORITA.)



Pi - glia la ro - sa e la - sciar star la fo - glia,  
Ho tan - ta vo - glia di far all' a - mor con te.

“ Fior di limone !  
 Limone è agro e non si puol mangiare,  
 Ma son più agre le pene d'amore.

(*Rifiorita.*)

“ Sei bellina, lo sento, lo so,  
 Port' i cappelli alla roccoco !

“ Fior di granato !  
 Se li sospiri miei fossero fuoco,  
 Tutto il mondo sarebbe bruciato.

(*Rifiorita.*)

“ Piglia la rosa e lasciar star la foglia,  
 Ho tanta voglia di far all' amor con te !

(“ Lemon blossom !  
 The lemon it is bitter, too bitter for eating,  
 But bitterer his pain that loves thee, sweeting.

“ Fair is my darling, I feel it and I know,  
 And wears her hair dressed *à la rococo*.

“ Pomegranate blossom !  
 If a flame of fire were the sighs I sigh,  
 All the world would be burnt thereby.

Gather the roses, and let the leaves be,  
 Dearly I love to make love to thee !”)

The following air is more popular in the city than in the country, and is often used for improvising insulting words, for which the common people of Tuscany have no little facility :—

E que - sta stra - da, la vo' mat - to -  
 Di rose e fio - re la vor - re' co -  
 - na - re, Di ro - se e fio - ri la vor - re' co -  
 - pri - re, D'ac - qua rosata, la vor - re' bag -  
 (RIFIORITA.)  
 - pri - re, Tu sei bel - li - - na, tu sa - rai mia  
 - na - re.  
 spo - sa, Tu sei bel - li - na, l'i - do - lo mio sei tu.

But the pretty and anything but insulting words which we give, are often sung to it:—

“ E questa strada, la vo' mattonare ;  
 Di rose e fiori la vorre' coprire ;  
 D'acqua rosata la vorre' bagnare.  
 Tu sei bellina, tu sarai mia sposa,  
 Tu sei bellina, l' idolo mio sei tu ! ”

(“ Of the street where thou livest, I'd fain have the paving.  
 With roses and sweet flowers I'd cover it o'er,  
 With water of roses, too, everywhere laving !  
 For 'tis thou art my beauty—my bride thou shalt be,  
 My beauty—I'll make my soul's idol of thee ! ”)

At the risk of wearying my readers, I give this *stornello alla Pisana*, or according to the fashion of Pisa, where the street singing is celebrated, and all the songs full of

flourishes (*fioriture*), turns and runs (*girigogli*). Take for example the peasant's song :—

Quan-do na-sces-te voi nac-que un bel  
 La lu-na si fer-mò nel ca- - - mi-  
 fio - - - re. La lu-na si fer-mò . . .  
 na - - - re, Le stel-le si can-gia - - -  
 . . nel cam . . mi - na - - - re.  
 - ron di co - lo - - - re.  
 O Bion-di - na, co - me la . . . va, Sen-za la  
 ve - - la la bar - ca non va.

“Quando nascete voi nacque un bel fiore.  
 La luna si fermò nel camminare,  
 Le stelle si cangiaron di colore.

(*Riforita.*)

“O Biondina, come la va,  
 Senza la vela la barca non va !”

(“When thou wert born a flower came to completeness ;  
 The moon stopped in its course, thy beauty seeing ;  
 The stars changed colour at sight of thy sweetness.

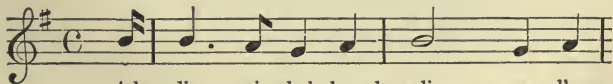
“My fair-haired beauty, how is't with thee ? say :  
 Without the sail, the boat may not make way !”)



But my space will not allow me to give more examples of the innumerable words and airs of the *stornelli*. I must not pass over without mention the patriotic songs, nearly all dating from 1848. Curiously enough, there are hardly any *rispetti* or *stornelli* containing patriotic sentiments. A few mention the Turks and barbarians, and complain how they carried away "La Bella Rosina" to slavery; or a girl on shore curses the Turkish chains which keep her love from returning to her arms. These point to the old days of the Saracen or Sallee Rover, the constant and daring ravager of the Mediterranean shores in the fifteenth and two following centuries.

But 1848 brought new life to the patriotic sentiment of Italy, and quite changed for the time the character of its national poetry and music. Garibaldi became the hero and inspirer of popular minstrelsy, and those who joined him the objects of popular ovation. One of the best known and most popular of these patriotic songs is that of the Tuscan volunteers, as they marched to the field of battle when the cause of *Italia una* hung in the balance :—

## L'ADDIO DEL VOLONTARIO.

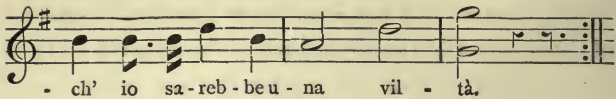


Ad - dio, mia bel - la, ad - di - - o, l'ar -

*Da Capo.*



- ma - ta se ne va, Se non par-tissi an -



“ Addio, mia bella, addio !  
L’armata se ne va.  
Se non partissi anch’ io,  
Sarebbe una viltà.

“ Grandi saranno l’ire,  
Grande il morir sarà ;  
Si mora ! E’ un bel morire  
Morir per libertà !

“ Non è fraterna guerra  
La guerra ch’ io farò ;  
Dall’ Italiana terra  
L’ estrano cacerò.”

(“ Adieu, adieu, my fair one !  
The army takes the field ;  
If I did not march with it,  
A coward I were sealed.

“ Oh ! great will be our fury,  
And great our death will be.  
If death comes, ’tis brave dying  
To set our country free.

“ It is no war ’twixt brothers,  
The war to which I go,  
But from the land of Italy  
To drive the foreign foe.”)

So rang the chorus day and night for weeks and months, as the volunteers marched through the ancient streets and squares of the City of Flowers, armed and banded for the first time, in the inspiring cause of “Italy one

and free." Time brought some deceptions, some disillusionings, and many disagreements and dissensions.

This same song made its appearance again in 1859; but since Italy has been united the various patriotic songs are seldom heard, and I only succeeded in obtaining some of the less-known ones from the son of one of the volunteers of 1848, who had learnt words and tunes from his father. The following is one of them, of which he only knew one verse:—

## INNO DEL 1848.

L'han giu - ra - to, li vi - dia Pont'

I - da, Giuà ca - la - ti dal mon - te e dal pia -

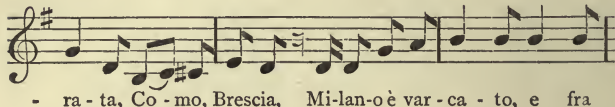
- - no. L'han giu - ra - to, si strin - se la

ma - no, Cit - ta - di - ni di cen - to cit -


- tà, Ca - ra I - ta - lia, bel suol a - do -



- ra - to, Ra - se - re - na la tua fron-te addo-lo -



- ra - ta, Co - mo, Brescia, Mi-lan-o è var - ca - to, e fra



po - co a Ve - ne - zia si va. . .

“ L’han giurato, li vidi a Pont’ Ida,  
Giù calati dal monte e dal piano.  
L’han giurato, si strinse la mano,  
Cittadini di cento città !  
Cara Italia, bel suol adorato,  
Raserena la tua fronte addolorata.  
Como, Brescia, Milano è varcato,  
E fra poco a Venezia si va.”

(“ They have sworn at Pont’ Ida, I saw them,  
The sons of the mountain and plain—  
They have sworn, their hands grasped as they pledged them,  
Five-score cities, brothers again !  
Dear Italy, face of new gladness  
To the sons of thy love thou may’st show ;  
We have freed Como, Brescia, and Milan,  
And soon to free Venice we’ll go !”)

At the Pergola, on the evening of the 11th of September, 1847, violent enthusiasm was roused by a very fine cantata, written by M. Mabellini, called *Italia*, or *Sorrow and Hope*. I have often seen veterans’ eyes

dimmed with tears at the sound of those heart-stirring words and soul-moving music. It is printed, so I do not give it here.

Besides the *rispetto*, the *stornello*, and the patriotic song, there is the *canzone*, or song of less sharply defined character, but always local, of which, as I have already said, three or four new ones make their appearance every year. Should one of these happen to take the fancy of the public, it runs through Italy like wildfire. Now and then a Neapolitan song comes *viâ* Rome to Florence and all the country round, when it is nearly always slightly changed in rhythm, generally to its advantage; but usually the songs are composed in and about the City of Flowers. They seldom last more than six months, and are then completely forgotten—so completely, that after a few years a new tune is sure to be composed for any words that hit the public fancy. One of the Neapolitan songs just mentioned held undisputed sway in the streets of Florence and in the villages along the Arno for nearly a year: a case of almost unprecedented popularity. I have no doubt that many of my readers will have heard the air; indeed, it has, I believe, since its sudden spring into popularity, been *arranged* (*i.e.* spoilt) by a Neapolitan composer:—

## PALUMELLA.

Pa - lu - mel - la, zom-pa è vo - la, Sul-le  
 brac-cie di Nën-na mi - - a Che taggio a  
 di-ce - re, che non mo mo - ro, U Pa - lu -  
 (PASSAGALLO.)  
 - mel - la, Pa - lu-mel-la, pen - sa - ci tu. . . Tra la  
 la la la la la la la la la la la Tra la  
 la la la la la la la la la la la . . .

“ Palumella, zompa e vola,  
 Sulle braccie di Nenna mia.  
 Che taggio a dicere, che non mo moro.  
 Palumella, Palumella, pensaci tu.  
 Tra la la.

“ Io ne vengo da Palermo  
 Pe trovar la Nenna mia,



Ma gli occhi lucidi son malandrini,  
M'hanno rubato, m'hanno rubato, lu cor a me."

("Woodpigeon, woodpigeon, up with thee—off with thee,  
Fly to the arms of my Nenna, my pet :  
Tell her the word I send—how still I'm true to her,  
Woodpigeon, woodpigeon, do not forget.

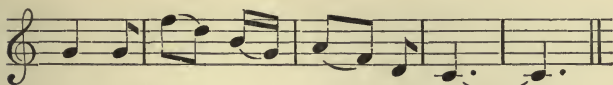
"Soon I'll be back again, back from Palermo,  
To tend my own Nenna, the girl I love best ;  
Though those bright eyes of hers, thief that she is for it,  
Have stolen the heart of me clean from my breast !")

About two years ago a song came out in Florence which had immense vogue, partly from its own beauty, and partly on account of the half-romantic, half-comic story attached to it—for the truth of which, however, I cannot vouch. It was reported that a well-known "cabby" of Florence, whose stand is at Santa Trinità, had fallen desperately in love with a Nubian or Abyssinian girl, one of a batch sent over by the Khedive for education in Florence, and that he had written the following song in her honour. His homage did not, however, touch her heart, as she soon afterwards married an officer in the army. The cabman is a first-rate player on the guitar, and has a nephew who sings remarkably well, with a very sweet, high, tenor voice. Be the story true or false, *The Queen of the Desert* took the town by storm, and nothing else was heard from morning to night, and from night to morning. The beginning

should be sung with fire and energy ; the end slower and much emphasized :—

## REGINA DEL DESERTO.

Fug-gia-mo nel de-ser - - to, Fug-gia-mo, a -  
 - man - te, mi - a, O-gni sen - tie - ro è a -  
 - per - - - to, Se tu ver - rai con  
*Piano.*  
 me, . . . Se tu ver - rai con me, . . . Se  
 tu ver - rai con me. . . . Fug - gia - mo,  
 per - che vit - ti - ma, Lo res - te - rei con  
 te, . . . Fug - gia - mo, per - che vit - ti -



- ma, Io res - te - rei con te. . . .

“ Fuggiamo nel deserto,  
 Fuggiamo, amante mia,  
 Ogni sentiero è aperto,  
 Se tu verrai con mè (*bis*).  
 Fuggiamo, perche vittima,  
 Io resterei con te !

“ Come barchetto errante  
 Abbandonato al vento,  
 Noi non avremo avanti  
 Che un solo duce, il cor (*bis*).  
 Sia tempio il firmamento,  
 Sia nume, pace e amor.

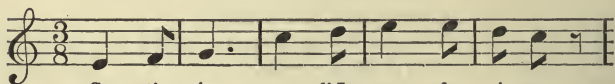
“ Il canto degli augelli  
 Sia l'inno tuo nunziale,  
 Un serto, su i capelli,  
 Di rose io ti farò (*bis*).  
 Regina del deserto  
 Io ti saluterò !”

(“ Forth to the desert lonely,  
 My loved one, let us flee :  
 One road for us, one only,  
 The road thou go'st with me : (*bis*)  
 Away ! a willing victim,  
 I'll give my life for thee.

“ Even as a boat careering  
 Before the wind is blown ;  
 No pilot for our steering,  
 But two fond hearts alone (*bis*) ;  
 Our church of Heaven's own rearing,  
 Our god, Love, on his throne.

“The birds thy bride-song singing,  
 Shall chaunt from leafage green ;  
 With rosebuds of my stringing  
 I'll crown thy tresses' sheen (*bis*):  
 My homage to thee bringing,  
 I'll hail thee Desert Queen.”)

The comic songs of Tuscany are *sui generis*. The airs are often very slight, and their charm entirely consists in the bright *espiègle* way of singing—or, I might almost say, reciting them. The bright eyes sparkle, and the mobile mouth is curved with laughter ; even the guitar seems to be animated with fun and merriment. This summer *the* comic song is a bitter complaint that Mariannina had jilted the singer, ending in an imperative request to pull his leg hard when he gets into the railway carriage and goes to Turin—utter nonsense, but jovial, rattling music. Comic songs are generally restricted to one new one a year. I have chosen the following, which was popular about four or five years ago, as a specimen, the air being prettier than the later ones :—



Se ti pia - ce l'In - sa - la - ti - na,  
 Se ti pia - ce il ca - fè col l'o - vo,



Vie - ni in cu - ci - - na, vie - ni in cu - ci -  
 O - ra ti pro - - vo, o - ra ti pro -

- na, Se ti pia - ce l'In -  
 - vo, Se ti pia - ce il ca -  
 - sa - la - ti - na, Vie - ni in cu - ci - na, Te  
 - fè col l' o - vo, O - ra ti pro - vo, se  
 la da - rò, Ma - no, non  
 mi vuoi ben . . . }  
 pian - ge - re, no no, no no no no no no non  
 pian - ge - re, No, no no no non pian - ge -  
 re . . . . nè so - spi - rar. . . .

“Se ti piace l' insalatina,  
 Vieni in cucina ; te la darò—  
 Ma no, non piangere nè sospirar.

“Se ti piace 'l caffè col l'ovo,  
 Ora ti provo se mi vuoi ben.  
 Ma no, non piangere, nè sospirar.”

(“If for salad you've a will, sir,  
 Come in the kitchen and eat your fill, sir :  
 Let's have no crying, no sighing, pray !

“ If you’ve a fancy for coffee and eggs, sir,  
I’ll soon feed your passion, i’ fegs, sir—  
But let’s have no crying, no sighing, pray.”)

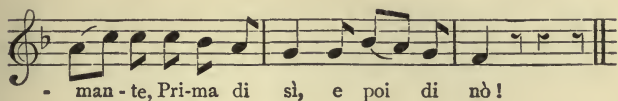
And so the verses run through the whole round of cupboard-love’s temptations which a clever cook can hold out to a hungry wooer.

There are two other favourite comic songs—the first purely Tuscan, the second adapted from the Roman, and now popular in Tuscany—which admit of, and indeed require infinite expression and archness in the singer.

*Alliegro.*

Mi son fat - to un ves - ti - ti - no, mes - so  
 sì, pa - ga - to, nò. E mi sen - to ti - ra - ta di  
 die - tro, Hè, ra - gaz - zi - na, pa - ga - te mi un  
 po'. Vie - ni sta - se - ra, Do - ma - ni se - ra, Sa - ba - to  
 se - ra, Do - me - ni - ca, nò ! E co - sì s' in - gan - na l' a -





“ Mi son fatto un vestitino,  
 Messo sì, pagato, nò :  
 E mi sento tirata di dietro,  
 ‘ Hè, ragazzina, pagate mi un po’,’  
 ‘ Vieni stasera,  
 Domani sera,  
 Sabato sera,  
 Domenica, nò !’ .  
 E così s’inganna l’amante,  
 Prima di ‘ sì,’ e poi di ‘ nò,’

“ Mi son fatto un capettino,  
 (Giubettino, giacchetino.)” (*etc., da capo.*)

“ A duck of a dress I had ordered—  
 Ordered it, yes—paid for it—no :  
 When twitch, comes a pull at my jacket,  
 And a ‘ Come, my girl, pay what you owe !’  
 “ Call in the evening—  
 Call in the morning ;  
 Saturday evening—  
 Sunday—no go !

“ And so we go cheating our lovers,  
 First with a ‘ yes,’ and then with a ‘ no !’”

“ A duck of a cape I had ordered,”  
 Jacket, overcoat, etc.)

For the song may run through the whole contents of the female wardrobe.

Here is a Neapolitan comic song Tuscanized :—

*Con brio.*

Quand' un uom' ha mess' i baf - - fi,  
 Ha bi-so-gnodi mu-lie - ra, Non c'è mo-do nè ma -  
 - nie - ra, Ma la fem-mi-na ci vuò.  
 Ma le fem - mi - ne son tutt' am - fan - fa - ri,  
 So - no tut - t' u - no cu - lo - re.  
 È quan - no fan - no a - mo - re, Si lo  
 fan - no per se spas - sar. Le fem - mi - ne son  
 fan, fan, fan, fan, fan so - no tut - t' u - no cu - lo - re, E  
 quan - no fan - no a - mo - re, Lo fan - no per se spas - sar.

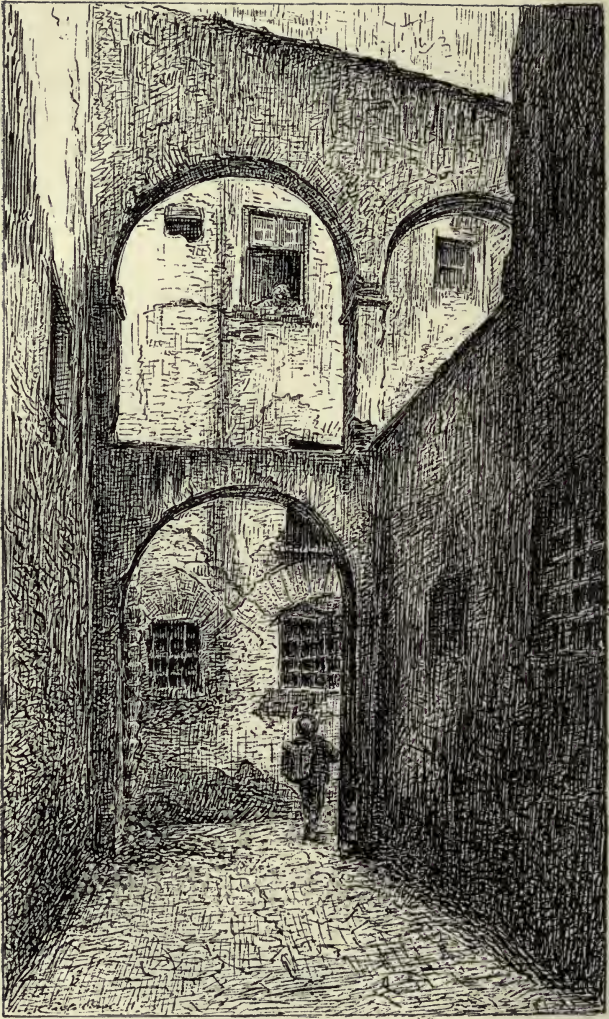
"Quand' un uom' ha mess' i baffi,  
 Ha bisogno di muliera :  
     Non c'è modo nè maniera,  
     Ma la femmina ci vuò.  
 Ma le femmine son tutt' amfanfari—  
     Sono tutt'uno culore ;  
     E quanno fanno amore,  
 Si lo fanno per se spassar—  
     Le femmine son fan—fan—fan—fan—  
     Sono tutt', etc. (*da capo.*)"

("When a youngster grows his whiskers,  
   'Tis women he must care for :  
   Without a why or wherefore  
   He must be a lady's man !  
 But the women they are humbugs ;  
   They're all bread of one baking :  
   And when love they are making,  
   They make it all for fun !  
 The women are hum—hum—hum—hum—  
   They're all bread of one baking.") (*etc., da capo.*)

But enough of attempts to translate the untranslatable. After all has been done that can be done by help of the most literal equivalent of the words, and most careful noting of the music, none but those who have lived among the Tuscan people can know what the Tuscan popular songs really are. Not till we hear them from Tuscan lips, to the simple accompaniment of the guitar, and perhaps a flute, in the open air, under the serene blue sky of evening, or the cloudless Tuscan moon, amidst the perfume of the lemon and growing grapes, and, above all, with the sweet, spontaneous, unaffected

Italian singing, like the singing of birds, so effortless it sounds and so irrepressible, can we really appreciate the charm of these songs—their simple pathos and old-world purity, their innocent playfulness, their shrewd humour, and their depths of sweet and sincere feeling.

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THE GHETTO.



## THE GHETTO OF FLORENCE.

A CHARACTERISTIC portion of old Florence will soon be a thing of the past ; the Ghetto, where but a few months ago no decent person could enter without a guardian-angel in the shape of a policeman, stands empty and deserted, doomed to disappear like the ancient city walls. Out of the gay streets radiant with sunshine, the shops full of carnival finery, masks, dominoes, bonbons, and bouquets, we passed from the Piazza dell' Olio, under a large archway, and found ourselves in the Piazza della Fraternità. Tall and dark, the houses towered above us, doorless and windowless ; on one side was a fine iron balcony, a relic of former splendour, and over a doorway, built of blocks of stone in the fashion of the fourteenth century, was a small shield with the Medici arms and *scrittojo* (counting-house) carved underneath. This was one of the houses of that great family before they became the rulers of their native city.

From the silent, sad square we dived into the Chiasso del Piovano, a narrow alley leading to a wee courtyard with dingy cells all round, into which one would not put

a dog to sleep; yet in some of these horrible holes two and even three families had been crowded together. Up a narrow staircase, lit by small apertures through which the brilliant rays of the sun illuminated patches of the dirty walls, causing the rest to appear still more dark and grim, we followed our guide, and at length found ourselves in a charming room, frescoed with garlands of vines and dancing bacchante; traces of gilding still shone on the ceiling, and it was like an oasis of gaiety and life in the midst of the abandoned squalor around. A hole had been knocked in the wall, and we wandered through a labyrinth of rooms, narrow passages, and staircases, until we came to a fine doorway with a Hebrew inscription above, which had been the Jewish school. With the aid of matches and a lantern we went in single file down a narrow, tortuous lane on the first floor, with street-doors up two or more steps opening out of it, and at last down a flight of steps into a square, with a large, double-handled pump in the centre. This is the Piazza della Fontana, surrounded with what once were palaces of the Della Tosa and Tosinghi families; grim and mournful-looking, as though lamenting their long-lost splendour. Nine stories high they tower above one, shutting out sun and wind, and the impression of utter desolation and stillness given by the empty embrasures of the windows and doors was almost oppressive.

A good staircase led up to a suite of fine rooms, whose

small balconies looked down on the Mercato Vecchio, the old market-place, which in the Longobard time was called "Foro del Re" (Forum of the King) and afterwards surrounded with the palaces and towers of the great Florentine families. After the battle of Montecatini in 1260, the Ghibellines expelled the Guelphs from Florence, and destroyed the great palace and tower of the Tosinghi, two palaces and towers of the Della Tosa, a palace belonging to a son of Ugo dei Medici, and many others.

Retracing our steps, we crossed the Piazza della Fontana, and mounting a narrow flight of stairs, found ourselves in a large, vaulted room, with innumerable passages leading in every direction. A few broad steps led into the Synagogue, a lofty, finely proportioned room, with a double row of latticed galleries, whence the Jewesses used to hear service; the ceiling was in ruins, and the whole place dismantled. Descending by a narrow back staircase, we came into a small courtyard made more gloomy by overhanging passages and small rooms built high above. The black walls to our left was one of the palaces of the Brunelleschi, that great family who at one time almost ruled Florence, and held vast possessions in and near the city. The tall, narrow doorway of the twelfth century had been bricked up, and other openings made, which led into pitch-dark, vaulted rooms, damp, and covered with moss and dirt. I groped up

a narrow staircase, and, from a low, vaulted room like a prison, looked out of a small window into the busy Piazza dei Brunelleschi, where once stood the ancient church of San Leo, suppressed some ninety years ago. The little square is now the chief market for chestnuts, and was full of life and gaiety. A strange contrast to the dismal place we were in. Whole families had lived in these dark rooms, and with the help of the lantern we could distinguish in one or two corners the few bricks that had served as fireplaces. Over one of the doors outside, some wag had written under a half-effaced coat of arms: *Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che 'ntrate*. Sad words, well suited to the unhappy Jews in old times.

Just opposite the old Brunelleschi Palace, under an overhanging passage sustained by three slender stone columns, was a well-known lodging-house, l'Androne, frequented by the very scum of Florence. A bed cost a halfpenny, and every evening the police came at sundown to see that the ticket-of-leave men were 'all in. Whenever a robbery occurred in Florence, l'Androne was surrounded and all its inmates arrested, a proceeding which seldom failed to attain the object of detecting the culprit.

In 1430 the Priors of Florence, to counteract the excessive usury of the Florentine bankers, who charged from 30 to 40 per cent., permitted the Jews to settle in

Florence under stringent rules, one of which was that they were not to lend money at more than four danari per lira a month, or 10 per cent. ; only a limited number were permitted inside the city walls, and all were to live in a small street then called Chiasso dei Rammaghianti, on the opposite side of the river, which to this day preserves the name then given of Via de' Guidei.

In 1439 the Signory ordered that the Jews were to wear a yellow badge, and only seventy were allowed to live in Florence ; but this law fell into abeyance, and in 1495 the patrimony of this persecuted race amounted to eleven millions of florins, which raised such an outcry among the people that the Signory was forced to banish them. Four years later the sentence was rescinded, "on payment of two hundred thousand florins as a fine for the wickedness of the Hebrews."

Bianca Cappello obtained various Oriental perfumes, salves, and love-philters from the Jews, and in return persuaded the Grand Duke Francis to repeal several barbarous laws, and to declare them free to exercise usury on payment of four scudi a head to the treasury.

Our guide now proposed to take us up the tower of one of the old palaces of the Della Tosa family. So rich and powerful were they that Corso Donati, when he attempted to seize the supreme power in Florence, did not hesitate to force his beautiful sister, Piccarda, to quit the convent of Sta. Chiara, and marry Rossellino Della

Tosa. Falling on her knees after the celebration of the marriage-service, she prayed to be pardoned for thus involuntarily breaking her vows, and for release from the husband she hated. Incontinently she was smitten with a deadly illness, and soon afterwards died. Dante thus mentions the unfortunate and lovely Piccarda in the "Paradiso."

"Ma riconoscerai ch'io son Piccarda,  
Che posta qui con questi altri beati,  
Beata son nella spera piu tarda.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Uomini poi a mal piu che a bene usi,  
Fuor mi rapiron della dolce chiostra :  
Dio lo si sa qual poi mia vita fusi."

(" . . . but thou wilt know  
Piccarda, in the tardiest sphere thus placed,  
There 'mid these other blessed also blest.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Thereafter men, for ill than good more apt,  
Forth snatch'd me from the pleasant cloisters pale.  
God knows how, after that, my life was framed.")

We began a weary climb, resting now and then in the adjacent rooms, whence we got enchanting peeps of the City of Flowers. At length we reached the top—a room positively frescoed with filth, out of which opened a terrace to the south, and another to the east. It made one dizzy to gaze down on the red-tiled roofs, stained deep orange, bright yellow, brown, and green, with various lichens. To our left, far below, was San Giovanni, the



baptistry which stood there before the Longobards invaded Italy, and was the mother-church of the diocese of Florence. The cupola loomed dark against the hill of Fiesole, on whose summit we could distinguish the dark lines of the ancient Etruscan walls. A mass of gorgeous colour, the Duomo glistened and glowed in the sunshine, and the lovely Campanile of Giotto, so elegant, so severe, so slight, and yet so strong, shot up into the blue sky as though conscious of, and rejoicing in, its own beauty. In front, the tower of the Bargello and the bell-towers of the Badia and of Sta. Croce stood out black against the snow-covered mountains of Val-lombrosa, and to the right Or San Michele rose, square, like a fortress, its dark walls lit up by the brilliant white of the tall, carved, marble windows. From the southern terrace we looked straight upon the fortress of Belvedere, standing out against the sky, surrounded with cypresses and ilexes. To the left the graceful tower of the Signoria Palace seemed to hang in the blue air, and far, far below us was the Mercato Vecchio, full of life, bright with the yellow and red handkerchiefs the women wear on their heads, and crowded with ambulant pedlars, whose small carts were covered with gay scarves and woollen wraps, toys and sweetmeats. The joyous noise of the crowd below came up to us like a confused murmur, contrasting vividly with the empty, abandoned Ghetto, in which we

were the only living creatures. The Loggia del Pesce, built by Vasari in 1598, was at our feet, with Della Robbias bas-reliefs of various fishes ; and on the opposite side of the market-place stood the palace of the Amieri, that great Ghibelline family, who led the van in all the internecine wars. At the left-hand corner of the market-place is an ancient tabernacle, grimy with age and smoke, which marks the spot where Pier da Verona (St. Peter Martyr) preached against the heresy of the Paterini. A small oratory was afterwards built there, where Mass was celebrated until 1785, when it was suppressed and turned into a shop, whose proprietor is, however, bound to keep a lamp burning before the faded fresco in the tabernacle. Almost opposite stood the well-known column of the market-place, erected in 1431. Donatello sculptured a statue of Abundance for the summit, which fell down in 1721, and was dashed to atoms. A new one was made by Foggini in the following year, which has just been removed with the column, preparatory to the destruction of the Ghetto and of the old market.

The old palace, built in 1280 by Foglia d' Amiero degli Amieri, and ornamented with leaves, in allusion to his name, Foglia (leaf), is now inhabited by the poorest class ; its once proud tower has been cut down, and is now the abode of a pigeon-fancier. Here lived the lovely Ginevra degli Amieri, whose father forced her to give up her true-love, a Rondinelli, and marry an

Agolanti. Ginevra fell ill during the plague, and was buried while in a syncope in the family sepulchre in the cathedral. Waking up in the middle of the night, she managed, after superhuman efforts, to raise the slab of her tomb, and trailing her long grave-clothes behind her, tottered to the door of her husband's house and knocked. Reviled as an evil spirit, she went to the Amieri Palace, praying her mother for admittance. The same thing occurred here ; so, as a last resource, she dragged herself to the house of her old love, who opened wide the doors, and caught her fainting to his heart. The Priors of Justice decided that all ties binding her to Agolanti were severed, and that she was free to marry the man she loved. The street leading from the cathedral to the Agolanti Palace is still called *Via della Morta*, in memory of "*La Bella Ginevra*."

Below us to the right lay a dark mass of old palaces, narrow alleys, small courtyards, and miserable hovels. Tradition says that here was the Campidoglio, described by Villani as a Roman fortress of great strength and beauty, surrounded by strong walls and a moat, fed by the Arno. Here stood the ancient church of *Sta. Maria in Campidoglio*, suppressed and destroyed a century ago ; near by, in the *Via degli Strozzi*, one can still see the steps leading up to the door of the ancient church of *S. Pier Buonconsiglio*, now a ribbon manufactory. Nearly opposite stands the *Della Luna Palace*, its original two

stories cut up into four or five, and inhabited by poor people. The popular name, Palazzo della Cavolaia (of the cabbage-woman), refers to a fable that, when Totila invaded Florence, he invited the chief men of the city to come and confer with him in the Campidoglio. A poor woman, who sold herbs and vegetables outside, noticed that many went in, but none came out ; so she warned a large party who were approaching, and thus saved their lives. They rewarded her well for her timely counsel, and founded a Mass for the repose of her soul. To this day a bell, which rings near here at sunset, is called by the common people, *La campana della cavolaia* (the bell of the cabbage-woman). The old palace seemed doomed to be connected with tales of blood. It originally belonged to the Manfredi, a Ghibelline family, who were impoverished and finally destroyed in the party wars. Then the Torelli of Fermo had it, and Lelio Torelli, the handsome and winning page of Cosmo I., gained the love of the beautiful and dissolute Isabella, his master's daughter, who was married to Paolo Giordano Orsini, Duke of Bracciano. When the duke left Florence, he confided his wife to the care of his cousin, Troilo Orsini, who fell desperately in love with her, and, mad with jealousy, had Lelio Torelli stabbed to death beneath a tabernacle close by. As is well known, Isabella was soon afterwards strangled by her husband at his villa of Cerreto, during a hunting-party he gave in her honour.

The palace then passed into the possession of the Della Luna ; and Niccolò, the last of his race, was the friend and boon companion of Cardinal Giovan Carlo de' Medici, who, from a captain in the guards, had become a cardinal, and whose manners and morals certainly savoured more of the camp than of the cloister. Both fell victims to the charms of Margherita da Cepparello, and her preference for the handsome young Niccolò della Luna turned the friendship of the cardinal into deadly hatred. One morning, after a brilliant *fête* given by him in the Giardino de' Semplici, the lifeless body of the luckless and too-fascinating Niccolò was found in the large marble fountain, where to this day the nympeas reflect their loveliness, and the dragon-flies glint and glisten above them in the sunlight.

Next door is the Palazzo Vecchietti, whose internal walls certainly look massive enough to be of Roman origin. This family was anciently called Vecchi, and their simple habits are praised by Dante.

“ E vide quel de Nerli e quel del Vecchio  
Esser contenti alla pelle scoperta ;  
E le sue donne al fuso e al pennechio.”\*

Many illustrious men did they give to Florence—  
Vanni di Jacopo Vecchietti, a famous captain in the

\* “. . . The sons I saw  
Of Nerli and of Vecchio, well content,  
With unrobed jerkin, and their good dames handling  
The spindle and the flax. . . .”



fourteenth century ; Marsilio, who was always employed as an ambassador when prudence and foresight was necessary ; Giovan Battista, the man of science, and intimate friend of Gregory XIII., and of Philip II. of Spain. An Oriental scholar and a great traveller, he was taken prisoner in Palestine, and sold as a slave ; his brother, after long search, ransomed him. Then there was Bernardo Vecchietti, a great patron of the arts ; the first works of John of Bologna were done for him, and the young sculptor lived much in his house. The quaint little satyr or devil still existing at the angle of the palace is one of John of Bologna's most charming works. This corner is called "Canto de' Diavoli" (Corner of the Devil's), from an old tradition that a fearful black horse and demons of hideous shape had flown away when Peter Martyr preached against the heresy of the Paterini from a pulpit hard by. Of the ancient church, San Donato de' Vecchietti, nothing remains but a small side door ; the tower belonging to the palace has been cut down, but still retains its fine coat of arms with five ermines, commonly supposed to be rats ; and which gave rise to the popular Florentine saying, when a person shows signs of age, *Tu stai prendendo l'arme dei cinque topi* (You are assuming the coat of arms with the five rats), a pun on the name "Vecchio," which means old.

Slowly descending from the high tower, we passed down some tortuous narrow alleys near where tradition



says that the shop of Domenico di Giovanni, surnamed "Burchiello," existed: the barber and popular poet of 1408, who gave his name to the facetious style of poetry he invented. Monsignore Leonardo Dati, himself a poet, says of him:—

"Burchius qui nihil est, cantu tamen allicite omnes,  
esto parasitus vatibus Etruriæ."

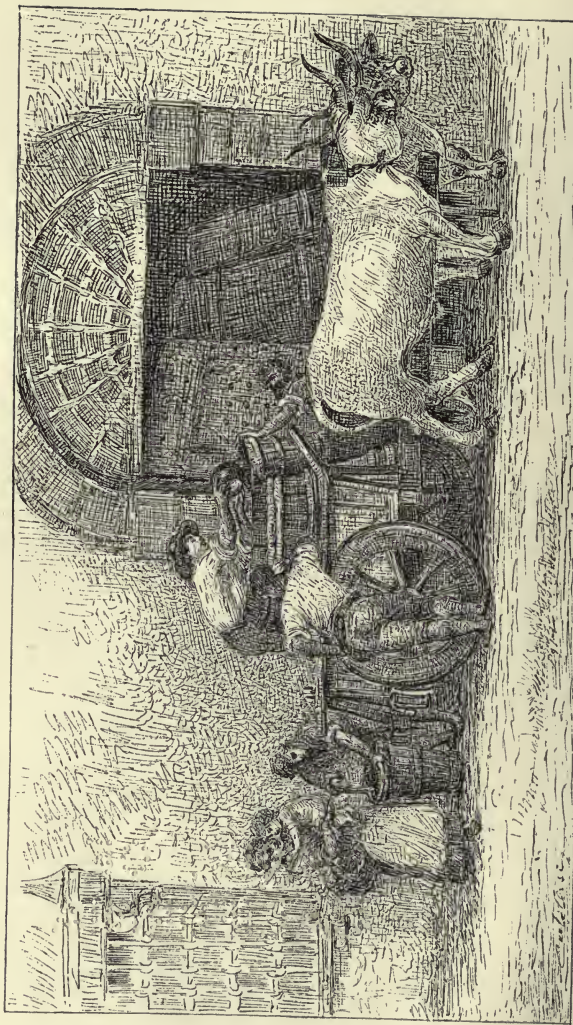
We conjured up all the gay company that was wont to assemble and listen to the sallies of the barber-poet: Leon Battista Alberti, Davanzati, Niccolò Urbinato, Luca Della Robbia, and Filippo Brunellesco, who built the dome of the cathedral. Antonio del Pollajolo lived close by in a house belonging to the Agli; this great painter, enameller, and goldsmith descended from a family of *pollajoli* (poultry sellers), whose real name had been merged in that of their calling. Further on we passed what had been the old hostelry of "Mala cucina" (bad cooking), and a few turns more brought us to one called "Male carne" (bad meat); most uninviting names, but famous in the annals of this part of Florence, which only became the Ghetto, or habitation of the Jews, in 1571. Cosmo I., at the instigation of Pope Paul IV., then charged his architect, Bernardo Buontalenti, to re-model the centre of the town in such a way that the Jews should be entirely separated from the rest of the citizens. The name Ghetto is from the Hebrew "Ghet," signifying division, or separation; and at nine

every night the keys of the gates of the Ghetto were taken to the Signory, so that none could pass in or out. Had a fire broken out, the unhappy Jews would have been burnt to death like rats in a hole.

Returning to the abandoned Piazza della Fraternita, whence we had started, we passed under the deep shadow of the arch out again into the bright streets and the sunshine, one of our party aptly quoting :—

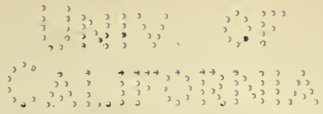
“ Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last ;  
You spurn'd me such a day ; another time  
You call'd me dog ; and for these courtesies  
I'll lend you thus much moneys.”

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THE VINTAGE AT THE TINIAIA.



### VINTAGING IN TUSCANY.

IN the lower Val d'Arno, overlooking the fruitful plain which extends from Florence to Empoli, stands an old villa, a long, low, roomy house, anciently belonging to the Arte della Lana, whose lamb bearing a banner over one shoulder is sculptured on various parts of its walls. In the twelfth century it was only a roof resting on high arches for drying the wool; then our host's ancestors bought it, filled up the arches, built a first-floor, and gradually added wing after wing. The rooms are large and lofty, and the staircase very handsome. The ceiling of one of the rooms is frescoed with Raphaelesque designs like the *loggia* in the Vatican. The house is full of old furniture, old china, and various Roman and Etruscan statues, and a splendid sarcophagus found on the property, for we are near Signa, the old Signa Romanorum of the legions. The villa is slightly raised above the plain, and about two miles from the Arno, opposite Monte Morello, the weather-teller of all the country round, as the old proverb says:—

Sé a Morello  
 V'é il cappello,  
 Non uscir  
 Senza l'ombrello." \*

To the left, on the opposite side of the Arno, lies the town of Prato and the beautiful line of hills behind it, and further up the valley is Pistoja, and the Apennines in the distance. To the right we see Florence with its stately duomo and campanile, and in the background the hills of Vallombrosa. Behind the villa is a large garden, all the walks of which are shaded with *pergole* (vines on trellises), and from thence the ground slopes up to vineyards and olive-groves, and to the wooded hills from the summit of which on a clear day one can discern the sea near Leghorn, some sixty miles off.

In this pleasant and picturesque old mansion were assembled a joyous company, mixed Italian and English, for the vintage of 1874. To the advent of the *forestieri* was ascribed by the courteous *contadini* the splendid yield of grapes, better than they had been for twenty-six years.† On a fine September morning we

\* " If on Morello  
 There is the cap,  
 Don't go out  
 Without your umbrella."

† That is to say, since the outbreak of the iodium. To give some idea of the virulence of the disease, the farms on this estate, though two less in number, used to produce at least two thousand *barile* of wine; and in this, an exceptional year, the yield was only one



started, Italian and English, men and women, masters and mistresses, and servants laden with innumerable baskets, big and little, each armed with a rough pair of scissors, and our *padrona* leading the way, with her guitar, pouring out as she went an endless flow of *stornelli*, *rispetti*, and *canzoni*, in which Tuscany is as rich as in any of the country products, maize or figs, pumpkins or tomatoes, oil or wine, or grain, the Italians amongst us improvising words to the well-known airs. The vintage is always a happy time; every one works with a will, and is contented and light-hearted. As Modesto, one of our men, said, "*Buon vino fa buon sangue*" (Good wine makes good blood).

The old *fattore* (bailiff), who had retired from all active work on the estate, except the management of his especial pets, the vineyards *alla francese* (vines cut low in the French fashion, not allowed to straggle from tree to tree as is the Tuscan usage), was very great on this occasion. He pointed out trees he had planted, and works he had done, fifty years ago, before the *padrone* was born. The dear old man was now seventy-eight, and as brisk and alert as any of us; with an eye still bright, and his keen, humorous face as full of vivacity as the youngest. He was full of old proverbs

thousand one hundred. One year, when the disease was at its height, they had five *barile* of stuff resembling mud! A *barile* holds fifty litres.

and wise sayings, like all peasants of the Casentino, his native region, about twenty miles south-west of Florence ; and looked sharply after all our workmen to see that each duly did the picking of his row of vines. He was struck with great admiration at the way in which Englishmen, and women too, worked, and quite concerned for the repeated drenchings in perspiration of a strenuous old gentleman of the party, remarking, gravely, "*Questo povero Signor Antonio! ma suda troppo!*" (This poor Mr. Tom, he sweats too much). He chuckled when we got hot and red under the burning sun, gracefully putting it to the ladies, "*Il sole d'Italia vi ha baciato.*" (The sun of Italy has kissed you.) By eleven we were thoroughly tired, and went to rest under the scanty shade of the olives and fig-trees with our guitar. One of the young peasants had lost his grandfather in Russia with Napoleon I., and we called him up, and told him to sing about the great general. He sung to a favourite *stornello* air :—

"Guarda, Napoleon, quello che fai ;  
La meglio gioventù tutta la vuoi,  
E le ragazze te le friggerai.

"Napoleon, fa le cose giuste,  
Falla la coscrizione delle ragazze,  
Piglia le belle, e lasciar star le brutte.

"Napoleon, te ne pentirai !  
La meglio gioventù tutta la vuoi ;  
Della vecchiaia, che te ne farai.

“ Napoleon, non ti stimar guerriero—  
A Mosca lo troveresti l’osso duro,  
All’ isola dell’ Elba prigioniero.”

(“ While you go our youths collecting,  
All our pretty girls neglecting,  
Pause, Napoleon, and beware.

“ Deal more justly with all classes,  
Make conscription of the lasses—  
Leave the plain and choose the fair.

“ Napoleon, if with ruthless hand,  
Of its flower you mow the land :  
In old age you’ll pay it dear.

“ Boast not, tyrant, of your glory,  
Moscow’s plains were grim and gory,  
Elba was a prison drear.”)

Twelve o’clock brought a welcome arrival—lunch from the villa. Grape-picking is a capital sharpener of the appetite. We were soon reclining—*sub tegmine fagi*—round a steaming dish of *risotto con funghi*, and a knightly sirloin of roast beef, which would have done honour to old England. A big *fiasco* (a large bottle bound round with reeds or straw, and holding three ordinary bottles) of last year’s red wine was soon emptied, well-tempered, I should say, with water from the neighbouring well. At a little distance the labourers in the vineyard were enjoying the unwonted luxury of a big wooden bowl full of white beans crowned with *polpette*, little sausages of minced meat and rice.

We first gathered all the white grapes. These were transferred from our small baskets to big ones, placed at the end of each row of vines. These bigger baskets were then carried on men's backs to the villa, where the grapes were laid out to dry in one of the towers, on *stoje*, great trays made of canes. Here they are exposed to sun and air for some weeks, when they are used for making the *vin' santo*. After the white grapes were gathered, we fell to on the black, of the choice kinds, the "San Giovese," the "Aleatico," the "Colorino," and the "Occhio di Pernice." These also were destined to be exposed on *stoje* in the same manner. They are used as *governo*, that is to say, when the new wine is racked for the first time these choice black grapes are put in, so as to cause another fermentation; they at once deepen the colour and make it clear.

How melancholy the vines looked stripped of their grapes! The glorious white and golden, and pink and deep red bunches had given a beauty to the landscape which one did not realize until they were gone, and the poor vines stood bare. In our discussions about the progress of our work, the time of day often came in question. The old *fattore* was very anxious to know how we in England knew the hour, as he had heard that our churches did not ring the *Ave Maria* at midday or in the evening. He had, doubtless, a

settled conviction that we were little better than heathens, but was too polite to say so right out. We explained that we had abundance of both big clocks and little watches; but he answered, "*Ma che*" (with a horizontal wave of the hand), "I have a watch too. I set it by the *Ave Maria* and hardly ever use it. At mid-day, when the *Ave Maria* rings, we know we are to eat; and when we hear it at sundown, twenty-four o'clock, as we say here, we leave off work; and at one o'clock of night (an hour after sunset) it rings again so that we may remember our dead and say an *Ave* for them." All our arguments to prove that clocks and watches might be good substitutes for the *Ave Maria* were useless, and he remained stanch to his idea that England must be a wretched place without the *Ave Maria*—" *Si deve star male in Inghilterra senza l'Ave Maria.*"

At last the beautiful great white oxen, with their large, soft, black eyes, and with tassels of red and yellow worsted dangling about the roots of their horns and over their cool moist noses, came to the edge of the vineyard, drawing a large vat (*tino*) fixed on the cart. Into this all the remaining grapes were thrown. A handsome lad of sixteen, after tucking up his trousers and washing his feet in a bucket of water drawn from the well close by, jumped atop of the vat and lustily stamped down the contents, singing as he plied his purple-stained feet:—

“Bella bellina, chi vi ha fatto gli occhi?  
 Che ve gli ha fatti tanto innamorati?  
 Da letto levereste gli ammalati,  
 Di sotto terra levereste i morti.  
 Tanto valore e tanta valoranza!  
 Vostri begli occhi son la mia speranza.”

(“My lovely charmer, who hath made thine eyes,  
 That fill our bosoms with such ecstasies?  
 Their glance would draw the sick man from his bed,  
 Or haply pierce the tomb and raise the dead.  
 Oh! my sweet love, thy beauty and thy worth,  
 Are all my hope and all my joy on earth.”)

Of such tender sentiment and musical sound are the songs of the Tuscan “roughs.” These songs are most of them the composition, both words and airs, of the peasants and artisans who sing them. The hills round Pistoja and the streets of Florence ring with an ever-renewed outpour of such sweet and simple song.

The *padrone* prides himself much on his fine breed of oxen, and told us the old Tuscan proverb, *Chi ha carro e buoi, fa bene i fatti suoi* (Whoso has cart and oxen does good business). When the last load of grapes was carted off we returned to the villa, where we found all hands busy in the great courtyard of the *fattoria*,\* on one side of the villa, emptying the grapes and must out of the vats with wooden *bigoncie*, high wooden pails without handles. These are carried

\* The *fattoria* comprehends the farm-buildings, cellars, granaries, bailiff's dwellings, etc., attached to a villa, just as in the Roman times the “Villa Rustica” was attached to the “Villa Urbana.”



on men's shoulders, and their contents poured into immense vats (*tini*) ranged all round the courtyard under covered arcades. In our wine-shed (*tinaia*) there are about fifty of these, containing from five to fifty butts each, besides three large square reservoirs of stone each holding three hundred barrels. The bubbling and boiling of the fermenting wine fills the air, and the smell is almost strong enough to get drunk upon. The men often do get tipsy, if they remain too long treading the grapes, or drawing off the new wine. But here it is an article of faith that the perfume of the must is the best medicine, and people bring weakly children to tread the grapes and remain in the *tinaia* to breathe the fume-laden air and eat of the fresh fruit; for at vintage-time no peasant or *padrone* refuses grapes to any one who asks. They say that *il buon Dio* has given them plenty, and why should they in their turn not give to those who have nothing? I suppose this universal readiness to give is one reason why there is so little stealing here. You see vines full of fruit close to the roads, and quite unprotected by any sort of fence, and yet no one of the country-side ever takes them. There are, it is true, certain *malfamati* villages, whose inhabitants have the reputation of thieves, and against these, and pilferers from the large towns, the vineyards are guarded by men armed with guns, with which they keep popping the night through. At times you see

twenty or thirty poor people standing quietly looking on, until called up to receive their dole of grapes, with which they go away happy, with their graceful "*Dio ve ne renda merito.*" At home they will mix water with the must they squeeze out of their basket or apronful of such ungrudged gifts, and make *mezzo vino*, or *acquarello* (water and wine fermented together), for the winter. The same thing is done on a large scale at many *fattorie*. This mixture of wine and water is distributed to the poor in winter, and is the common drink of the workmen about the villa. After the first good wine is drawn off from the vats, the *vinaccia* (skins, grape-stones, and stalks) is put into the press, and the second wine pressed out. This is good, but considerably rougher, from the larger amount of tannin, due to the skins and stalks, than that which is drawn from off the vats after fermentation without any agency of the press. After passing through the press, the clots of *vinaccia* are again put into the vats, and water is poured upon them. In eight or ten days a fresh fermentation takes place, and the *vinaccia* is once more pressed in the wine-press. This gives *mezzo vino*, or *acquarello* (half-wine), not at all bad, but of course of insufficient body to keep through the summer. For this there is no want of demand at the villa. Besides the rations of the workpeople, there are the *poveri del buon Dio*. In Tuscany there are no almshouses or

poorhouses, save in the chief towns. Most villas have one or two days in the week when alms are distributed to all who come and ask. Here the gathering of poor occurs every Monday and Thursday, at ten in the morning. A hunch of bread, a glass of half-wine, and five centimes are doled out to every applicant, and on Christmas Day any one who brings a *fasco* has it filled with *mezzo-vino*, and gets half a loaf of bread and half a pound of uncooked meat. Such has been the custom, I am told, at this villa, for many hundred years.

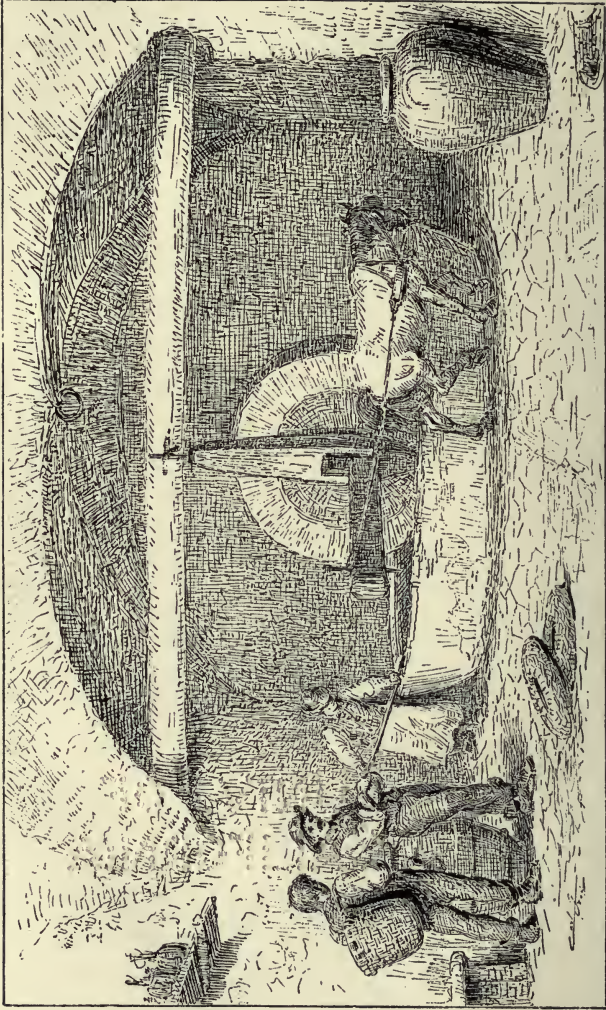
Our happy holiday vintaging lasted for five days, and then we went to help the vintaging of one of the *contadini* of the *padrone*. This family had been on the estate for two hundred and eighty years. All their vines were trained Tuscan fashion on maples, and we had the help of ladders and steps to gather the grapes. Half the grapes, and indeed half of all the produce of the land—grain, pumpkins, flax, fruit, or wine, belongs to the *padrone*, who pays all the taxes and buys the cattle. The *contadino* pays no rent for his house, which the *padrone* keeps in repair. The peasant gives the labour and the master finds the capital.

This is, in rough outline, the system of *mezzeria* or *métayer* (half and half) tenure, still universal in Tuscany. Like all human things, it has two sides, and may be condemned as the most backward, or defended as the most patriarchal and wholesome of systems, binding

landlord and tenant in the bond of an obviously common interest, and encouraging the closest and most familiar relations between the two. When the landlord is intelligent, active, and judicious, he may become a centre of enlightenment and improvement to his tenantry; but all his attempts must be made with the most cautious discretion, or he will infallibly frighten, and perhaps alienate, his tenantry, who are thorough Conservatives, and love *stare super antiquas vias*. Thus the best commentary on the "Georgics" is still agriculture in action in Tuscany, a passing peep into one of whose most pleasing chapters has been attempted in this paper.

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OIL-MAKING IN TUSCANY.



## OIL-MAKING IN TUSCANY.

“*La prima oliva è oro, la seconda argento, la terza non val niente*” (The first olive is golden, the second silver, the third is worthless). Thus said the old *contadino* Bencino, quoting a Tuscan proverb, on a splendid, late November morning, whilst carefully gathering the olives into a queer wicker-basket which hooked into his belt. This basket was like a half-moon, and about three-quarters of a foot deep; it fitted close to Bencino’s waist, and did not impede his movements, or shake the precious fruit and bruise them.

We had driven out from Florence to a *fattoria* or large farm, in the lower Val d’Arno, to see the process of oil-making; as our host said, “*real* oil, not the fabricated stuff you poor people in England are used to. You shall see the olives squeezed, and taste the virgin oil.” We made rather a face at this proposal; but the beauty of the country soon drove all disagreeable ideas out of our heads.

After a lunch at the villa, an ancient and original place, with enough old furniture and old china in it to

gladden the hearts of a dozen *bric-à-brac* hunters, we walked two miles through the woods, up to the *podere* (farm) of Bencino, one of the *contadini*, on the top of a hill. The view was astounding. Florence lay to the right, at our feet, the dark cupolas looming out grandly against the snow-covered hills of Vallombrosa, which rose behind the bright city. In front was the fruitful valley of the Arno, with glimpses of the river here and there, glistening like silver, and the slender, leafless branches of the willow glowing scarlet and orange as they tossed in the breeze. The old battlemented walls of Lastra-a-Signa looked stern and weather-beaten, as though still frowning defiance to the enemies of Florence. The Pisans, with the help of English free-lances, pillaged and burnt the old place in 1365, and Galeazzo Visconti again in 1397. Lastra-a-Signa shared the fate of Florence in 1529, and after a gallant defence fell into the hands of the Spaniards, under the Prince of Orange, who committed such atrocities that the peasants still scare their naughty children with the threat of giving them to the Spaniards; and an old Tuscan proverb says, *E meglio stare al bosco e mangiar pignoli, che stare in Castello con gli Spagnoli* (Better to live in the wood and eat stone-pine nuts, than in a castle with the Spaniards). Monte Morello and Monte Ferrato rose behind, while the villas dotted here and there on the dark hillsides gleamed out white in the brilliant sun-

shine. The picturesque little town of Prato seemed quite close, instead of being twelve miles away, and we could plainly distinguish the beautiful marble cathedral, in which Filippo Lippi worked so well, and inspired his brush with the lovely face of Lucrezia Buti, the young nun who left her cloister at Prato to follow the smooth-tongued painter. In the far distance we could see the peaks of the mountains of Carrara, and to the left rose the majestic and snow-capped Apennines, all rugged and intersected with deep valleys.

The road was steep, and we wondered how the noble, big, white oxen managed to drag the awkward heavy two-wheeled *carro* (country-cart) up such an incline. The ground was arranged in terraces, each with a line of olive-trees on the outside and a line of vines on the inside. The centre was ploughed and sown with grain, while the banks of the terraces supplied fodder for the cattle. A Tuscan *contadino* throws away nothing, and manages to cultivate his *podere* like a garden.

The black shining olives hung thick on the slender branches, which bent low under the weight. The crop was abundant, "*una vera grazia di Dio*" (a real bounty of God), as Bencino said. All the *contadini* of this *fattoria*, whose *podere* were situated on the slopes of the hills, where the ground is stony, and therefore suitable for the cultivation of olive-trees, were busily engaged gathering the fruit; the men up in the trees and on

ladders, the women and children picking up those which fell to the ground. The bruised berries are kept apart, to make the second quality of oil. The trees are most carefully and severely pruned, hollow in the middle, to form a basket-shaped tree. *Agli olivi, un pazzo sopra e un savio sotto* (A mad man at the top of the olive-tree, and a wise man at the roots), says the proverb.

Enough fruit had been picked for the day's pressing, so we climbed up the bare bit of steep road which led to Bencino's house, accompanied by the old man and his four stalwart sons, all of whom had served in the army without ever having a bad mark, as their father told us with considerable pride. The house stood on the brow of a hill, and was built round two sides of a square courtyard paved with bricks; on the third side rose a high wall, with an arched gateway, over which was an old escutcheon, carved in stone, of the fifteenth century, with a lily and "S. M." entwined. A covered staircase was outside the house, and led into a large room, with huge beams and rafters, browned with age and smoke. The fireplace was immense, with seats in the corners. Here we found Bencino's mother, a ruddy, brisk old dame of near ninety; we wanted to know her exact age, but she could not tell us, and replied with a proverb, "*Gli uomini hanno gli anni ch  sentono, e le donne quelli che mostrano*" (Men count the years they feel, and women those they show); adding that she had "*molti,*

*ma di molti anni*" (many, many years), and that those sad years when Carlo and Pasquale, two of her grandsons, were both away at the war, had seemed to her a lifetime. "Ah, Illustrissimo," said she to the *padrone*, with tears in her bright old eyes, "let us pray that these kings and great folk don't make any more wars. It would kill me and the *sposina* there (Carlo's pretty young wife), if he had again to put on his *bersagliere* coat." The poor old woman clasped her wrinkled, brown hands, and the pretty *sposina* echoed, "Let us pray to God." We had to admire the baby's fat legs, and drink a glass of Bencino's *vin vecchio*, which was excellent, and then went down into the courtyard, and descended two steps into the *frantojo*, or oil-pressing room.

In the centre was an immense stone basin, in which revolved a solid millstone about five feet in diameter, technically called, I believe, an edge-runner, turned by a splendid white ox, which, to our astonishment, was not blindfolded. Our host told us that it was difficult to get oxen to do this work; it takes time and patience to accustom them to it. The millstone was set up on edge and rolled round in the stone basin, secured to a big column of wood which reached to the ceiling. The whole machine was most old-fashioned and clumsy, and the *padrone* said, laughing, was evidently as old as Noah's ark. Into the stone basin, as clean as a dairy-maid's pan, five sacks of olives were emptied, which,



in a short time, were reduced to a mass of dark greenish-brown thick pulp. Stones and all were mashed without any noise, save the occasional lowing of the ox when his tasselled and ornamented nose-bag was empty. When Bencino judged that the olives were sufficiently crushed, the pulp was taken out from the mill, with clean new wooden shovels, and put into a circular shallow basket with a large hole through the middle, made of thick cord fabricated from rushes grown in the Pisan marshes, and looking very much like open cocoanut matting. As fast as these *gabbie*, or cages, as they are called, were filled, they were carried by two men, on a handbarrow with long handles at each end, to the press in the corner of the room, and piled with the greatest exactitude one on the top of the other under the press. Then began the hard work. Two huge posts clamped with iron support a colossal beam, through which goes the screw, finishing below in a large square block of wood with two square holes right through it.

Into one of these Carlo stuck a long beam, on the end of which he hooked a rope, which was secured round a turning pillar of wood, about six or eight feet distant, with a handle against which the men threw their whole weight. With many groans and squeaks the big block of wood revolved to the right until the rope was all twisted round the pillar, when it was unhooked, the beam lifted out of its hole in the block, and carried on



Carlo's stalwart shoulder to be inserted into the hole further back, the rope untwisted, and again hooked round the end of the beam, and so on until not a drop more could be extracted. The press was then screwed back, and the *gabbie* carried on the handbarrow to the mill, where they were emptied, and their contents again ground for some time ; the *gabbie* were then filled anew, and put under the press for the second time, when a great deal more oil came dripping out, but of inferior quality. The refuse that remains, called *sansa di olivi*, is almost black, and quite dry and gritty. This is sold for threepence or fourpence a *bigoncia* full, about fifty-five pounds in weight, to some people in the Val di Greve, who buy up the *sansa* from all the country round. They wash it in the running water of the Greve, when the pulp and the skin of the olive floats on the surface, and the crushed stones sink. With large, flat, pierced, wooden ladles the pulp and skins are skimmed off the water and boiled in immense cauldrons previous to being again put under the press. About ten per cent. of oil is thus extracted, but of very inferior quality, called *olio lavato*, or washed oil. This is chiefly used in Italy for making soap, but a good deal is exported. It has a nasty, sweet, sickly taste, entirely wanting the aromatic bitter so much prized in the good oil. But to return to the press. At its foot is a large marble underground receptacle, into which the oil ran. This was

carefully covered with a hinged, wooden lid to prevent any dust or dirt from falling in. Bencino lifted up the lid and showed us the stream of oil falling into a clean wooden *tinello* or small vat.

Olives contain two-thirds of water and one-third of oil, and for some time it came dripping clear and bright like amber; but when the *gabbie* had been squeezed and squashed down to about half their original size, and the press was screwed back, and the big block of wood raised to admit large heavy rounds of wood, which were screwed down tight again on the pulp, it was more mixed with dirty-yellow water, and lost its golden tint.

The oil naturally floats on the top of the water, and Carlo Bencino was busily engaged in skimming it delicately off with a big tin scoop. He poured it through a funnel into a clean wooden *barile* (a small barrel with narrow ends, held together by large, flat, wooden hoops, and holding about thirty-six quarts); and when this was full he shouldered it and carried it off to the *chiaritojo*, or oil-clearing room, where the *barile* is emptied into a large *conca*, a terra-cotta vase like an immense flower-pot, well glazed inside. This room was, like everything else, scrupulously clean, and paved with red bricks sloping towards the middle, where there was another underground marble receptacle, in case of an accident, such as the breaking of a *conca*. The temperature is kept as equable as possible, and in cold winter weather

a brazier is lighted at night. Nothing spoils the look, though not the flavour, of oil so much as getting frozen ; it becomes thick, and seldom quite regains its golden limpidity, even when treated by people who thoroughly understand it.

For fifteen or twenty days it is left to clear in these *conche*, when the thicker or second quality sinks, and the clear, brilliant, yellow oil is carefully put into *barile* and sent down in the ox-cart to the *fattoria*, where it is emptied into tall, well-glazed terra-cotta jars. These are kept in a dark room, with a southern exposure, protected from any violent changes of temperature by a fire during the cold weather.

Ten or twelve *barili* of oil can be pressed in a day, and as all the other *contadini* of the *fattoria* bring their olives and those of the *padrone* up to the press at Bencino's, this process goes on for some time when the crop is abundant. It is hard work, and must be done with cleanliness and nicety. At first our host had some difficulty in getting the *contadini* to see that it was of importance to separate the bruised from the fresh-picked fruit, and to keep the press and implements clean. They thought it was only a whim, which they obeyed, partly from a sense of duty, but chiefly because the *padrone* is extremely beloved by his tenantry.

The jollity and fun of the *battitura* (thrashing) or of the vintage was wanting ; the days were short and the

wind cold, and, as Pasquale said, "one's throat is out of tune in winter, and without a song work seems dull and heavy; however, we make up for it at night when we have *pan unto* (oiled bread)." We asked what this was, and he explained that during the process of pressing the *contadini* who made the oil always invited their friends to eat *pan unto* or toasted bread dipped in the new oil. The old folk talk about the crops and family affairs, and the young people sing and dance, and make love to one another. The girls here never dance out of their own homes or the houses of friends. On the *festas* and saints' days the young men dance together out-of-doors, and the girls look on. Another odd custom is that a girl who is engaged to be married either does not go to the *festas*, or, if she does, she puts on her everyday working dress, and does not wear her best ear-rings or bright-coloured little shawl tied coquettishly across her breast. She keeps aloof from the general company, and her *fidanzato*, or affianced husband, does not go and talk to her.

The evening passes away merrily, for many of the young men play the guitar or the accordion, and almost all sing enough to join in a chorus. Some of the old *contadini* are renowned for their talent as story-tellers, but their tales are all about real people. No northern Italian has ever heard of a fairy hobgoblin; even ghosts are scarce, and are held in small estimation.

Our host insisted on our tasting the new oil, and to our surprise it was delicious, like a decoction of very aromatic herbs, and entirely free from the rank, nasty taste we generally associate with oil. We now understood why Italian salads are so different from ours, and how a *fritto*, or dish of fried meat and vegetables, comes to be so excellent in Tuscany. Coming back to the villa by twilight through the silent woods, at the end of our walk we met a joyous company going up to pay Bencino a visit, and eat *pan unto*. They had two guitars and an accordion, and, after cordial and even affectionate greetings between them and the *padrone*, passed on, singing in chorus as they breasted the hill. One of the girls was very pretty, which we shrewdly suspected explained Pasquale's blushes, and the *padrone* said she was a good girl, and so he would allow the marriage. We noticed that our host addressed all his people as *figliuolo mio* (my son), even men who were thirty years his senior, while the women were invariably *bambina mia* (my little girl), unless he knew their names. Altogether a very pleasant and easy-going life is the Tuscan peasant's. He has a direct interest in the produce of the land, and in bad years his *padrone* helps him with grain, wine, oil, beans, maize, and other necessaries, often at a heavy loss to himself.





THE  
CANTON



VIRGIL AND AGRICULTURE IN TUSCANY

VIRGIL AND AGRICULTURE IN  
TUSCANY.

AGRICULTURE in Italy, at least in Tuscany, has changed so little since old Virgil sang, that his descriptions would pass muster with any peasant of the present day. The "hardy rustic" still goes into the woods and seeks for an elm or, by preference, an oak, to fashion into a plough-beam, for a *stanga* or *stiva*, "*stegola*" (handle), not less than eight feet long, and for the earth-boards, called *orecchi*, "*ures*" (ears), and also for the share-beams with double backs, called *dentale a due dorsi*, (*duplici aptantur dentalia dorso*), which hold the *gombera* (*vomero*), or large iron coulter for breaking up the earth, and the *vangheggiola*, or smaller one for making furrows for sowing. On the slopes of the hills of Fiesole the whole plough is often called *bombero*, instead of *aratro*. The yoke is rudely made of lime or beech, and the capacious chimney of the peasant's house still affords room for seasoning the wood.

The *aja*, or threshing-floor is still made solid with potter's clay, and beaten hard. Virgil recommends a

huge roller, which is an unknown implement in Tuscany. The careful peasant still picks and chooses beans, maize, and such large seeds one at a time by hand, and the ancient theory that a fine crop of bloom on the walnut-trees indicates a good wheat-harvest still holds as good, witness the well-known proverb :—

“ Quando le noce vengono a mucchierelli  
La va bene pei ricchi e i poverelli.”\*

I cannot recognize any of Virgil's names for olives, *orchades*, *radii*, or *pausia*, in the Tuscan *morinelle*, *infrantoie*, *rosselline*, *correggiuole*, or *pendoline* and *leccine*. The two first named are also called *morcai*, because they contain more oil than the others, and make more *morchia*, or pulp, in the crushing-machine. They are larger olives, but not so aromatic in taste as some of the smaller sorts. The approved way of making an olive plantation is still to hew an old stock in small pieces for planting, when a young olive-tree springs from the sapless wood :—

“ Quin et caudicibus sectis, mirabile dictu !  
Truditur e sicco radix oleagina ligno.”

Pliny says that olive-wood worked and made into hinges for doors has been known to sprout ; but on propounding this to a Tuscan countryman I met with extreme disbelief.

\* “ When the walnuts come in handfuls,  
All goes well for rich and poor.”

Some rash innovators have lately suggested sowing olive-kernels and grafting the young trees ; but Tuscans do not like changes, and are apt to quote :—

“ Chi lascia la via vecchia per la nuova  
Sa quel che lascia, non sa quel che trova.” \*

If Virgil found it impossible to enumerate the different kinds of grapes and their names, how much more so is it the case to-day? But his praises of the Falernian wine are well deserved. White Falernian is excellent, and has an aroma and bouquet of its own, withal strong and generous. Tuscany is deservedly proud of her *chianti*, and *vin santo* from any respectable *fattoria* is not to be despised. But the worst of Italian wines is, that you are seldom sure of getting the same two years running.

The manner of making wine has not changed since the time of Virgil. The white oxen bring the grapes from the fields, in a vat placed on an unwieldy, heavy ox-cart, painted scarlet, to the *tinaja*, or place where the *tini* or vats are. The grapes are emptied out into *bigoncie*, tall wooden pails without handles, which the men carry on their shoulders. The grapes are poured into the immense open vats, where they are stamped upon night and morning by the bare-legged peasants, to prevent the upper stratum of grapes be-

\* “Whoso leaves the old road for the new,  
Knows what he leaves, but not what he may find.”

coming acid by too long a contact with the air. When the fermentation has ceased, the clear must is run off; a man gets into the vat and pitchforks the murk into *bigoncie* again, which are emptied into the winepress. As a pictorial subject this press is delightful, but it is inconvenient and extremely wasteful. Two huge posts of wood support an immense beam, through which works a wooden screw, finishing at the bottom in a square block of wood with two square holes straight through it. Under this stands what is called the *gabbia* (cage), a round, vat-shaped, iron-clamped receptacle, made of strong bars of wood. The murk is put into this, and when it is full, *toppi*, round slabs of wood, like colossal cheeses, are piled on the top of the murk. Then a long pole is stuck into one of the square holes at the bottom of the screw, and to the other end is hooked a rope, which is secured round a turning pillar of wood about eight feet off, with a handle against which three or four men throw their whole weight. Slowly, with many creaks and groans, the huge block of wood descends on the round slabs, and the rope curls round the pillar, while from between the bars of the press gushes out a dark, turbid, dirty-looking liquid, which one can hardly believe will ever turn into ruby wine. This operation is repeated by unhooking the rope, lifting the beam out of its hole, and carrying it, on a man's shoulder, to the hole behind, until the murk by



sheer physical force is pressed into a compact mass, and contains no more liquid.

Virgil's excellent advice about thoroughly seasoning and breaking up the land before planting vines is carried out to the letter in Tuscany, where the ditcher makes a trench at least six feet deep and four feet wide, called *scasso reale*, which is left open to sun, wind, and rain for six months or a year before it is again filled in, after having been drained in a rough and ready manner by pitching all available stones into the bottom of the trench. The vine-cuttings, *magliuoli*, or, better still, two-year-old rooted plants, *barbatelli*, are then planted two on each side of a young maple-tree destined for their support. If a vineyard is to be made, the quincunx system, recommended by Virgil, is always followed, and you will still hear the head of the gang of workmen saying "they must be like soldiers, properly in line." A little further on you will see a sturdy peasant following the plough, and others sowing and hoeing over the field; one at least will be singing a *stornello* at the top of his voice. Their legs are generally bare far above the knee, and *nudas ara, sere nudus* is at once recalled to your mind. Down in the valley, by the brawling streamlet, whose course you can trace far away into the blue distance by the double line of tall poplars, glinting in the sun, grow the tall, graceful, blue-green canes (*Arundo donax*). What would they do in Tuscany

without the *canne*? Hedges are mended, young trees staked, and vines trained on *canne*. They need no care, and are as useful as they are ornamental.

The warning against planting olive-trees in the vineyards, for fear of fire, is no longer regarded; on the contrary, olives are very generally planted in the new-fashioned *vigne alla francese*, or vineyards according to the French system, partly because they give very little shade, and partly with an eye to the future, in case the dreaded phylloxera were to devastate Italy, when the unhappy proprietors would at least have their olive-trees to fall back upon. The tree sacred to Pallas will grow on the wild mountain-side, in the *biancana* or white marl, which is so poor that even the vine needs a very large quantity of manure in order to succeed well. Virgil's advice to study the colour of the soil is borne out in the Tuscan proverb:—

“Terra bianca, tosto stanca;  
Terra nera, buon gran mena.”\*

Vines are still planted and trained as in Virgil's day; and, alas! his warning against the “poison of the hard tooth” of sheep and goats still holds good. Would that all goats had long ago been sacrificed to Bacchus!

The fashion, in Tuscany at least, and I believe more or less all over Italy, is to keep a herd numbering from

\* “White earth is soon exhausted;  
Black earth bears good wheat.”

ten to three hundred sheep or goats at your neighbours' expense. Hedges are ruined, forests denuded of underwood and young trees; and often it is the syndic of the village, or some important person in the commune, who thus sets the law (for there is a law against permitting goats and sheep to injure other people's property) at defiance. Being persons of authority, they are not likely to be attacked for breaking the laws they ought to administer.

The care of vines, as Virgil says, is never-ending, the ground must be dug over three or four times in the year, and the clods broken with the back of the hoe. As soon as the labour of the vintage is finished, that of pruning begins. If the Tuscans laid to heart what the poet so truly observes :—

“ Be the first to dig the ground, etc. ;  
Be the latest to reap the produce,”

the wine would much improve. As a rule the grapes in Tuscany are picked too soon, with a consequent loss of saccharine and alcohol in the wine. The old saying though, *Fammi povera, ti farò ricco* (Make me poor, I will make thee rich), is being more followed, and the vines are more scientifically pruned and with better instruments.

The propagation of the vines is done in various ways. The *magliuolo*, which I take to be Virgil's *truncus*, is the most used. The well-ripened wood of the long

branches of the vine is cut into lengths of about three feet; nearly two feet is pushed underground with a long iron instrument which has a deep slit at one end, like two fingers. Then there is the *propaggine* (*propaginis arcus*), which consists in arching a long vine-branch, and burying about a foot of it underground. When the roots are formed, this is severed from the parent plant; but they say the vine is not so long-lived as when treated in the first-mentioned way.

Cattle are a great resource to the Tuscans, and they take a legitimate pride in the noble white oxen from the Val di Chiana, with small heads and horns, large, liquid, brown eyes, and soft, fine skins. I have seen a pair at the fair at Prato, standing twenty hands high, their beautiful heads all decked with various-coloured bits of cloth and small looking-glasses. Round their immense bodies was tied a scarlet ribbon to show off still more their girth. One involuntarily repeated Lord Macaulay's lines:—

“ And deck the bull, Mevania's bull,  
The bull as white as snow.”

The breeding of these cattle is most profitable; they are all stall-fed, as pasture is unknown in Tuscany. It is generally the work of the women and boys and girls to collect the fodder, which varies with the time of year from grass and clover to vine, elm, and oak leaves. The calves are most carefully attended to, and Virgil's advice

not to fill the pails with milk, white as snow, but to leave it all for the beloved young, is perforce attended to, as the large white breed are such poor milkers that they have but just enough for their calves. When a milch cow is wanted she is bought from the herds driven twice a year down from the Swiss Alps. But Italians use so little milk and butter, that in any rather out-of-the-way village it is impossible to buy either.

As to the horses, so beautifully described by Virgil that one recognizes at once a first-class breed, their descendants are indeed degenerate! The Italian horse, generally speaking, is a wretched animal. Small, ill-made, cow-hocked, overworked and underfed, broken-in and made to do hard work at between two and three years old, he is the type of what a horse ought not to be. The small ponies are the best animals they have now in Italy. They probably owe something to Eastern blood, as their heads, legs, and good hoofs recall the Arab. They are fast and hardy, but generally overdriven, which ruins their paces.

The sheep and goats, as I have before said, are a real pest in Tuscany, and the municipalities are beginning to awake to the damage they commit. The milk-cheese described by Virgil is extremely popular to the present day. The sheep are milked, and the milk is slightly warmed over a fire; some *presame* is thrown in, which consists of a mixture of rennet and the beard of the wild



artichoke. In four hours the milk is set ; and large quantities are sold, neatly folded up in a mat of green rushes strung together. It is called *raveggiolo*. Unless salt is added it will not keep good more than twelve hours. To make the *raveggiolo* into cheese is a simple operation : it is put on an inclined plane of basketwork and gently pressed with the hands for some time. It seems some of the shepherds have a reputation for making far better cheese than others, and this is attributed to their having hotter hands. I have, though, noticed that a pretty daughter often has a great deal to do with the goodness of the cheese.

The lambs are killed when between twenty-eight and thirty-five days old—a great waste of meat. But Italians as a rule will not eat mutton, and lamb is often passed off as kid, which is considered more delicate.

Bees are usually kept by the monks, and few things are more picturesque and serenely beautiful than an old monastery garden in the spring-time. The double avenues of dark cypresses, and a tangled undergrowth of rosemary, lavender, and China roses, the grass all enamelled with daffodils, primroses, and wild orchises, and the bees busily humming hither and thither, form a picture not easily forgotten.

The hives are almost invariably made of the hollowed trunks of willow trees, closed at the top and bottom with boards, and the cracks filled up with clay ; very like what is described in the “ Georgics.”



A village priest, living not far from Florence, has invented a wooden hive of the most ingenious fashion, and a way of taking the honey without destroying the combs. Don Giotto has the rare gift of handling bees without having to fear their anger and painful sting. He will walk up to a hive of strange bees, open it, and take out the small inhabitants, who crawl all over him, and seem rather to like being disturbed; while the priest's kindly face beams with pleasure, he being an enthusiastic apiculturist.

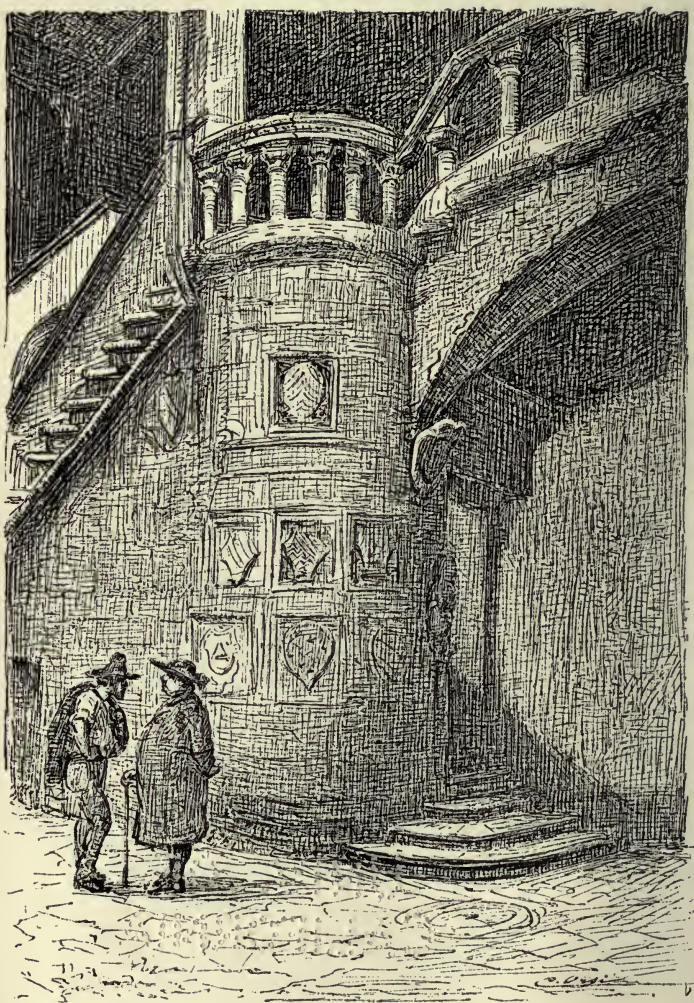
Bees were always popular in Italy, and Messer Giovanni Rucellai's "Le Api" (The Bees) is still a standard work, particularly on account of the beautiful Italian, for the author's notions about bees are on a par with Virgil's. He wrote "Le Api" in 1524, and published the first edition in 1539.

Many of my readers must have often compared Virgil with Italy of the present day. The love of home and country, and the strong family affections which are so striking now, are described by the old Mantuan poet, whose *Praise of Italy* is the most exulting hymn ever written in honour of a country.

"But neither the groves of Media, that land of wealth, nor fair Ganges, and Hermes, turbid with its slime of gold, can vie with the glories of Italy. . . . Teeming crops o'erspread it, and the juice of the Massic vine; olive-trees possess it, and goodly herds; hence comes

the warrior-horse, that proudly bounds into the field ; hence the snowy flocks, Clitumnus, and the bull, the chiefest victim, which, often bathed in thy hallowed stream, lead to the shrines of the gods the triumphs of Rome. Here is ceaseless spring, and summer in months where summer is strange. . . Think too of so many glorious cities and laboured works, so many towns piled by the hand of man on steepy crags, and the streams that flow beneath those ancient walls ! . . . Hail, realm of Saturn, mighty mother of fruits, mighty mother of men !”

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THE MUNICIPAL PALACE. POPPI.

TOMMASO CRUDELI AND THE  
FREEMASONS OF FLORENCE IN 1733.\*

THE first Lodge of Freemasonry was instituted at Florence in 1733, by Charles Sackville, Lord Middlesex, afterwards First Lord of the Treasury, and Equerry to Frederick, Prince of Wales. He was a poet and fond of music, and in 1737 was *impresario* of the Pergola at Florence. The Masons first met in Via Maggio, at an inn kept by G. Pasciò, called by the Florentines Monsiù Pasciò, or Pascione, and the first Master, or, more correctly, Venerable, was Mr. Fox, a great mathematician, and a man of considerable learning. These meetings always ended with a good dinner, and, finding that the innkeeper of Via Maggio did not treat them well, the Masons abandoned his house and went to John Collins's, himself a Freemason, and owner of the best inn in Florence. The second Master was the founder, Lord Middlesex, and he was succeeded by Lord Raymond, who had the reputation of being an unbeliever. One of

\* Most of the facts in this paper are taken from "Tommaso Crudeli, e I Primi Framassoni in Firenze," by F. Sbigoli, Milan, 1884.



the principal personages was a Prussian, Baron Phillip Stosch, a great archæologist and numismate; he was a political spy, first in the service of Holland, then of England, and bore an indifferent reputation, particularly among the English. The first Tuscan received as a Freemason was the celebrated Dr. Antonio Cocchi, so often mentioned by Horace Walpole and Horace Mann, "Dr. Cocchi is better worth chronicling than many of the Florentine princes." Born at Benevento in 1695, he studied at Pisa, and, on taking his degree in medicine, went to practise in Elba. He accompanied Theophilus Hastings, Lord Huntingdon, to England, and remained three years in London, afterwards travelling with his patron, who often left him without money to buy bread. The Princess of Wales wanted Dr. Cocchi to enter her service, but he refused, and returned to Tuscany in 1726, when Jean Gaston named him Professor of Medicine at Pisa, but, being a poor orator, he exchanged to the schools of Florence, where he taught anatomy. Dr. Cocchi was a man of prodigious memory, considerable talent, and great literary taste; he was the friend of all the foreigners in Florence, and had a special admiration for the English character and mode of life. Add to this that he edited and printed the first edition of "Benvenuto Cellini," and we shall not wonder the Head Inquisitor suspected him and warned him to be very cautious.

Tommaso Crudeli, Giuseppe Cerretesi, Antonio Nic-



colini, Paolino Dolce, and the Abbés Franceschi, Ottaviano Bonaccorsi, and Buondelmonti, are the chief names among the sixty Florentine Masons; but it does not appear that they were very assiduous frequenters of the meetings, and after the famous Bull published in Rome in April, 1738, by Clement XII., denouncing Freemasonry, they ceased altogether to attend. Even John Collins was intimidated, and, in concert with Tommaso Crudeli, who appears to have been the secretary, and with Lord Fane, the English minister, persuaded Lord Raymond, the Master, to dissolve the Lodge.

Paolino Dolci, mentioned above, was one of the personal attendants of Jean Gaston, and bore a vile name; he was celebrated for his beauty, and is lampooned in the satires of that time in Florentine Billingsgate of a most forcible kind.

Antonio Niccolini, a cadet of a noble Tuscan family, donned the priest's robe, without however taking orders, in order to enjoy the many ecclesiastical benefices belonging to his house, and to have leisure for study. Celebrated enough during his life, he is now all but forgotten. Like most of the Florentine nobility, Abbé Niccolini was educated by the Jesuits, but having travelled in Germany, Holland, France, and England, and formed friendships with the most illustrious men of those countries, he returned with enlightened and liberal ideas, and was in consequence called a Jansenist. The

Prince of Wales, afterwards George II., paid the Abbé much attention in London ; so, on his return, Cosmo III. exiled him from Tuscany, under suspicion of being an innovator and a libertine. This caused Montesquieu to say, "My friend Niccolini must have said some huge truth." The Grand Duke only relented after a year of incessant intercession on the part of the high clergy. Abbé Niccolini then went to Rome, and became a prelate ; but he was too high-minded and liberal to be tolerated by the Curia, and soon returned to his fine palace in Via dei Servi in Florence, where the musical entertainments of the Abbé Marquis became celebrated. M. de Broses says that he never met any one who united such clearness of intellect with so much grace, and such a powerful memory with so facile a delivery. He talked equally well on the last mode of dressing hair or a proposition of Newton. He had a large share in the fourth edition of the "Vocabulary of the Crusca," and it was at his expense that the Madonna di Foligno was engraved at the time that he reclaimed and drained the plain round that city. In the interesting collection of his letters to Giovanni Bottari, we see that although he only belonged to the Freemasons for a short time, yet he always retained the tolerant spirit and love of progress which characterize that body. A man who in 1761 could write as follows is of no common stamp :—

“I should wish for intelligence and true religion in a Pope. The latter is of no use without the former; sanctity without doctrine, as Saint Gregory Nazianzen teaches, leaves a man with only one eye instead of the two he ought to have. Bigots will always be deceived by people who are cleverer than themselves, and will ruin religion and the Apostolic See, which cannot exist without doctrine, or, rather, without good sense. Rome is rapidly going to pieces, and is discredited all over the world.”

Abbé Niccolini died at Rome on the 4th of October, 1769, and they say that Emperor Joseph II. cried on hearing of his death. His tomb in the church of Trinità dei Monti, was probably destroyed by the French soldiers in the beginning of this century.

Giuseppe Maria Buondelmonti was another of the Masonic body. Born in Florence in 1713, Soria calls him “the most learned and the most talented of the Florentine nobility.” A poet, an orator, and a philosopher, he was chosen to preach the funeral orations in honour of Jean Gaston, of Charles VI., and of the mother of Francis of Lorraine, in San Lorenzo. Together with Andrea Bonducci, author and printer, he translated the “Rape of the Lock,” and was a great admirer of all the works of Pope. Gray wrote an “Imitation of an Italian Sonnet by Signor Abbate Buondelmonti,” and turned a song of his into Latin,

while Horace Walpole put it into English. Many of my readers may remember it in Horace Walpole :—

“ Spesso Amor sotto la forma  
D’amistà ride, e s’asconde ;  
Poi si mischia e si confonde  
Con lo sdegno e col rancor.  
In pietade ei si trasforma,  
Par trastulla e par dispetto ;  
Ma nel tuo diverso aspetto,  
Sempre egli è l’istesso Amor.”

“ Risit amicitiae interdium velatus amictu,  
Et bene composita veste fefellit Amor :  
Mox irae assumpsit cultus faciemque minantem,  
Inque odium versus, versus et in lacrymas :  
Ludentem fuge, nec lacrimanti aut crede furenti  
Idem est dissimili semper in ore Deus. ’

(“ Love often in the comely mien  
Of friendship fancies to be seen ;  
Soon again he shifts his dress,  
And wears disdain and rancour’s face.  
To gentle pity then he changes  
Thro’ wantonness, thro’ piques he ranges ;  
But, in whatever shape he move,  
He’s still himself, and still is Love.”)

Buondelmonti was named member of the Crusca, and instead of treating some abstruse question of grammar or rhetoric in his first speech, he chose the subject of war ; particularly recommending that all unnecessary cruelty should be abolished, and suggesting the idea of an European Congress to be appealed to as arbitrator. This enlightened ecclesiastic died young at Pisa, in 1757.

Tommaso Crudeli was born in 1703 at Poppi, the picturesque ancient capital of the Casentino. He studied Latin in his native town, and then went to Florence under the well-known canon of San Lorenzo, Pier Francesco Tocci. At eighteen, Crudeli went to Pisa, and, after taking his degrees, visited Padua and Venice, where he remained nine months as preceptor in the Contarini family; returning to Poppi, he made frequent visits to Florence, becoming celebrated for his wit and pleasant manners and his "magnificent nose," which is mentioned in several comic poems of that time. In 1733 he settled entirely in Florence, earning his living by giving Italian lessons to the numerous English residents, with whom he was an universal favourite. Crudeli suffered terribly at times from asthma, but that did not prevent his being a prominent member of the Academy of the Apathists, where he often exercised his talent for improvising, and also wrote verses and lyric poems. Hearing from his English pupils of the pleasant Masonic meetings, he was seized with a desire to join the brotherhood, but being afraid of the Holy Inquisition, he hesitated until he heard that Dr. A. Cocchi, two Augustine friars of Santo Spirito, and Paolino Dolci had become members; he became a Mason in 1735, and dined frequently at John Collins's.

When Bernardo Tannuci became minister to Charles

III. of Naples, he invited his friend and pupil, Tommaso Crudeli, to go there as court poet, with a stipend of fifty ducats a month. Unfortunately he refused, or he might have lived to do something really great in literature. He was one of the first Italians who tried his hand at the fable, and some of his free versions of "La Fontaine" are admirable. He translated "Le Superbe" by Destouches, and it was given in the theatre at Poppi, with a prologue, turning the existing Italian theatre into ridicule, and paving the way for the reform which, thanks to Goldini, was carried out a few years afterwards. In the person of the Censor, understood to be himself, Crudeli says :—

"I am all for laughter, but not for that of a low buffoon,  
Which kills noble pity in every breast,  
And make matrons bend their heads and blush."

And again :—

". . . Laugh at the blushes  
Called into your cheek, fair, gentle woman ;  
That laughter is born of an injury done to you ;  
But all do not laugh : hidden anger  
Swells the breast of the father,  
For that lascivious jest is a grave insult  
Done to him, to his wife, and his daughter."

Crudeli does, however, call a spade by its proper name, and some of his poems which then had a great reputation are quite unreadable. We must remember, however, that he only followed the fashion of his day,



and that we could cite various reverend authors of most licentious poems.

The house where Tommaso Crudeli lived as a youth at Poppi, was opposite the monastery of the Friars of Vallombrosa, whose life was not of a character to edify the townspeople, or to inculcate religion and decency ; this, no doubt, contributed to the covert dislike and distrust he had of the clergy in general, whose ire he roused by the ode written on the death of Filippo Buonarroti, praising him for the firmness he showed in resisting the exorbitant pretensions of the priests. From that moment the Nuncio and the Chief Inquisitor began to collect evidence against our poet, and determined on his ruin. They had not long to wait. When the last Medici died on the 9th of July, 1737, the priests hoped to regain their ancient supremacy in Palazzo Pitti, through the favour of the Electress Palatine, who at first had great influence with Francis of Lorraine. The Archbishop of Florence and the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor Stoppani, as well as the Inquisitor Ambrogi, who had a large share in the Bull of 1738, were most anxious to find out the secret of the Freemasons, and seizing a priest, Bernini by name, tried to threaten and cajole him into denouncing his brother Masons.

In January, 1739, the Grand Duke Francis and his wife, Maria Theresa, entered Florence amid great rejoicings. Francis was an industrious man, animated

with the best intentions towards Tuscany, perfectly tolerant in religion, and jealous of any encroachment on his sovereign power. He had become a Freemason some years before, and could not therefore be expected to view the tribunal of the Inquisition, unknown in Lorraine, with favour. Yet this humane and tolerant man was so fearful of offending the Pope and his own wife, who was a bigot, and of rousing the diffidence and animosity often shown towards foreigners by the Italians, that he allowed himself to be made an instrument of, to persecute an innocent man and a brother Mason.

After the Lodge had been dissolved, some of the members used to meet at the house of Baron Stosch, a foreigner, a Protestant, and a man of indifferent character, and soon the most extravagant stories were circulated about the proceedings at these meetings.

At that time all good Catholics were obliged to confess at Easter, under pain of being conducted to church by two policemen. The Jesuits made such good use of the confessional that they collected four accusations against Tommaso Crudeli, the Abbé Buonaccorsi, and Cerretesi. One of these was signed by Andrea Minerbetti, who was half-witted; another by a priest named Grossi, whom Crudeli had lampooned for his vanity and ill-breeding some years before. The latter accused the poet of denying the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, the authority of the Holy Inquisition, and of saying in the

house of Baron Stosch that he considered St. John the Evangelist was an ass.

With these documents, and a letter from Cardinal Neri Corsini, nephew of Clement XII., the Archbishop of Florence, the Nuncio, and the Chief Inquisitor waited on the Grand Duke a few days before his departure for the war in Hungary against the Turks. The cardinal prayed Francis to exile Lord Raymond and Baron Stosch, to arrest the chief criminals professing themselves Masons, but who were a disgrace to that body, and to purge the University of Pisa of the old professors, and entrust its management to the Archbishop of Pisa, Monsignor Cerati, a zealous and saintly personage. He finished his letter with a threat of withdrawing the Nuncio from Florence.

The Grand Duke made more resistance than was expected, and recourse was had to the Jesuit father confessors of the Electress and the Grand Duchess. Francis still hesitated, and called the secretary of state, Abbé Giandomenico Tornaquinci, to counsel, who advised compliance with the Chief Inquisitor's demands. So at length orders were given to exile Baron Stosch and to imprison Crudeli and Buonaccorsi. The order of banishment was sent to Stosch, who at once called on Horace Mann, the English Resident, to protect him. Mann with some difficulty obtained, first, a delay of eight days, and then the suspension of the order until the King of

England should reply to a letter Francis wrote to him on this subject. We must suppose that the answer was satisfactory, as the Baron remained undisturbed in Florence until his death, in 1757.

Fearing that the falsity of the accusations against Crudeli and Buonaccorsi would be brought under the notice of the Grand Duke, Father Ambrogi did not call on the Bargello (head executioner) to arrest them until some days after Francis had left Florence. Buonaccorsi fell dangerously ill, so only Crudeli was suddenly seized at midnight on Saturday, the 9th of May, while returning to his house in Borgo S. Croce. He was taken to the public prison, and thence transferred to the cells of the Inquisition. The news was at first received with derision, but when it proved true, astonishment and sorrow were universal. Gaiety and fun were banished the city, and the vicar of the Chief Inquisitor having declared that "*gl' Inglese eran' molto pericolosi*," all foreigners, and the English in particular, were shunned as though they were lepers.

In spite of a promise of kind treatment to Counts de Richecourt and Rucellai, Tommasi Crudeli was kept for thirty-six days in a cell six paces long, with a small aperture into a dark passage. A dirty bed, swarming with vermin, was put into this hole, and the refinement of cruelty was carried so far as to deny him a light at night, in spite of his infirmity. No doctor was called in,

though twice the friar who attended him said he was dying. At length the news of this ill-treatment began to be bruited about in Florence, and Crudeli was removed to a larger room, after the window had been almost entirely bricked up, and the sick man, used to gay society and every comfort of life, was shut up in the dark, deprived of books, pens, paper, and friends. Several times the Inquisitor, Father Ambrogi, interrogated him, but, in spite of the miserably infirm state in which he was, could never entrap him into admitting his own guilt or accusing others. At length, by bribery, the friends and relations of Crudeli contrived to receive letters from him, which were shown to Count de Richecourt. The Duke of Newcastle was induced by the English residents of Florence to order Horace Mann to represent to the Regency of Tuscany that it was against the honour of England to permit the unhappy poet to be kept in prison for the crime of being a Freemason and a friend of the English.

After thirteen long months of suffering, Tommaso Crudeli was given up by the Inquisition to the civil power, to be imprisoned in the Fortezza da Basso. He had broken a blood-vessel, and was in a rapid decline, but wrote to the Council of Regency, "Now my honour and peace of mind are in safe keeping, and I trust my liberty will soon follow." Meanwhile the poor, half-witted Minerbetti had been tormented by conscientious



scruples about his confession, and, calling a notary, retracted the whole story. At length, on the 20th of August, 1740, Tommaso Crudeli was taken to the church of San Piero Scheraggio, under the Uffizzi (now suppressed), to hear his sentence. The Regency refused to allow the proceedings to be public, as the Inquisitor had taken no notice of the retraction of Minerbetti, and several of the most respectable citizens and men of letters were implicated in his insane ravings. After a long admonition, Father Ambrogi condemned Tommaso Crudeli to retire to his own house at Poppi, which he was only to leave in order to attend Mass at the opposite church of the Friars of Vallombrosa, and to recite the seven penitential psalms once a month under penalty of paying a thousand scudi for religious purposes. This was, I believe, the last sentence promulgated by the Holy Inquisition in Tuscany.

In April, 1741, Crudeli was declared free, through the good offices of the new Nuncio Archinto, with Pope Benedict XII., who, it is said, was himself a Freemason; and the poor poet returned to Florence, where he died, aged forty-three, in January, 1745, with words of forgiveness to his enemies on his lips.

Francis of Lorraine was so moved when, on his return, he read the authentic documents, that in 1743 he ordered the prisons of the Inquisition to be thrown open, and for eleven years kept their tribunal entirely closed.

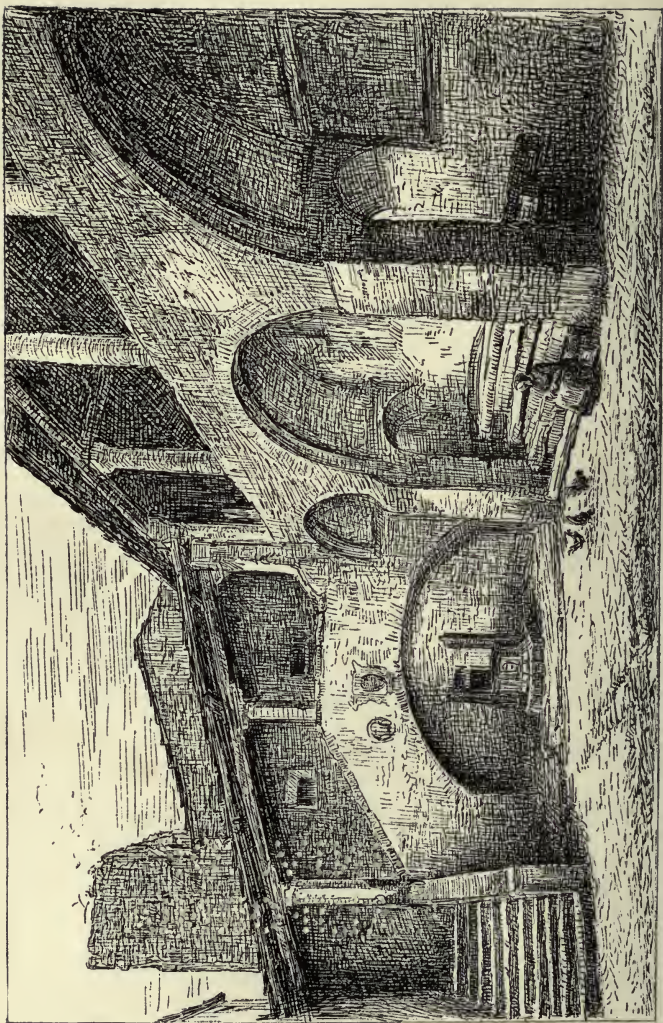


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Afterwards he put all tribunals under the civil law, only allowing the Inquisition a shadow of their former power. Peter Leopold took advantage of the incessant pretensions advanced by the Chief Inquisitor, and abolished the famous tribunal altogether in 1782.







SAN GIMIGNANO.

*SAN GIMIGNANO DELLE BELLE TORRE.*

“Thou hast a word of that one land of ours  
And of the fair town called of the fair towers ;  
A word for me of my San Gimignan,  
A word of April's greenest-girdled hours.”

SWINBURNE.

FOR many miles round, San Gimignano is seen crowning the hill, its square towers breaking the sky-line in a quaint and picturesque manner. What vicissitudes have those high towers seen, and what famous men have passed through the old gate which still frowns defiance at the peaceful traveller !

Poggibonsi, the station for San Gimignano on the Florence and Siena line, has, like most Italian towns and villages, an interesting history. The old castle, whose ruins we see on the hill above the village, was taken and dismantled by the Florentines in 1257, to punish the people for their Ghibelline tendencies ; ten years later, Charles of Anjou spent four months in besieging it, and, furious at being balked by so insignificant a place, nearly all Italy having submitted to him after his victory at Benevento over Manfred, he ordered a strong fortress to be built

inside the old castle walls, and left a governor there. As soon as Conradin arrived in Italy to try and wrest his birthright from French supremacy, the townspeople rose and turned out the Angiovinos and Florentines, declaring for Conradin. But when he succumbed at Tagliacozzo (August 23rd, 1268), and the Florentines defeated the Sienese on the heights of Colle, Count Guido di Monfort, governor of Tuscany for Charles of Anjou, joined the Florentine army, and Poggibonsi again underwent the horrors of a siege. The castle and the fortress were razed, and the inhabitants, deprived of all civil rights, were forced to quit their old city, and, descending into the plain near the torrent Staggia, founded the present townlet. The commanding position tempted the Emperor Henry VII., in 1313, to rebuild the old castle and surround it with stockades; he called it Poggio Imperiale, and lived there for two months.

On the road from Poggibonsi to San Gimignano, we passed near the mediæval castle of Strozze, once a stronghold of the Salimbeni of Siena, celebrated in the verses of Salvator Rosa, who painted some of his finest pictures there, when staying with his friends, the Riccardi of Florence, who owned the place for several centuries. Further up the valley, we came in view of the towers of unequal height, and the grey walls of the old town stood out against the blue sky. The country is rich and smiling, and the contadini were busy tying up their vines



and cutting green fodder for their cattle, while the hedges were enamelled with flowers glowing in the bright April sun. We soon came to the foot of the hill, and entering the more modern line of walls, built in the thirteenth century, drove up a narrow paved street and through a frowning double gateway, where the incline was so steep that our gallant little horses had to be encouraged with much cracking of whips and calling upon Sant' Antonio, into the Piazza della Cisterna ; then, turning round the base of one of the square high towers, we found ourselves in the Piazza della Collegiata, in front of the old Municipal Palace, and transported back into the middle ages.

How out of place and unreal the people walking about in modern dress looked ! We pictured to ourselves the gallant train following Dante Alighieri when he came as ambassador from the city of Florence on the 8th of May, 1299, and dismounting in great pomp and state at the foot of the very steps we stood on, went up into the Council-hall, and by his fiery eloquence carried everything before him ; or the more martial escort of Niccolò Machiavelli, who, in May, 1507, came to San Gimignano to raise and order a regiment of burghers to fight against Pisa in the Florentine interest.

Mounting the steep steps, we entered the great Hall of Council, decorated with several fine pictures from suppressed churches and monasteries, and with an immense

fresco by Lippo Memmi, very similar to his well-known work in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena. At the feet of the majestic Virgin kneels the donor, Messer Nello de' Tolomei, in his *podestà* robes; the canopy which shields her and the Infant Jesus is upheld by angels and San Gimignano. Under the Madonna, in Gothic letters, is written, "*Lippus Meñi de Senis me pinxit,*" and lower down, in Roman characters, "*Al tempo di Messer Nello di Messer Mino di Tolomei di Siena, onorevole potestà e chapitano del Chomune e del popolo della Terra di San Gimignano, MCCCXVII.*" This important work of art was damaged in 1461 by opening two doors into adjacent rooms, and the great Benozzo Gozzoli did not disdain to repair it, as is seen by the following inscription in the right-hand corner: "*Benotius Florentinus Pictor restauravit Anno Domini M<sup>o</sup>CCCC<sup>o</sup>LXVII<sup>o</sup>.*" A portion of the original intarsia-work benches are still in their places, where the councillors and rectors used to sit "decently habited with a hood and tunic or a chlamys of sober colour." The Municipal Council still meet here, and let us hope they lay to heart the apt sentence inscribed above the seat of the Provost of the Priors—

"Priposto,  
Odi benigno ciascun che propone.  
Risponde grazioso e fa ragione." \*

---

\* "Provost, listen benignantly to all who propound. Reply graciously, and do justice."

On one side of the great hall is the small and elegant tribune decorated with the line, *Animus in consulendo liber*, in intarsia work. Here it was that Dante advocated the cause of the Guelphs and induced the people of San Gimignano to send their representatives to a meeting of the Tuscan league at Florence. This is commemorated by an inscription on one marble slab, while close by is another in honour of the great modern Italian statesman, Cavour.

One of the doors which cut off the legs of the saints in the fresco by Memmi leads into a smaller back room, where the Provost and the Priors held their private meetings to discuss matters before laying them before the General Council. The intarsia benches all round the room are fine examples of 1475, and are decorated with verses written by Filippo Buonaccorsi, surnamed "Il Callimaco :"—

“ Pergite, Silviadæ, Romano sanguine creti,  
Pace frui, legesque sacras, atque omnibus æquam  
Unanimes servare fidem : sed tollite, si quis  
Excitat adversos discordi fœdere cives,  
Et veterum moveant, et vos exempla novorum.  
Evellenda prius, sterilis quam crescat avena.  
Dogmata, ut hæc servant subsellia publica, cives  
Quis cura est Silvi, sic pectore fixa tenete.” \*

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\* “ Ye sons of Silvius, sprung from a Roman stock, continue to enjoy peace, and living in harmony to preserve the sacred laws and equal faith to all men. But if any one endeavours to stir up your fellow-citizens by a hostile compact, away with him. Follow in this the example set by those of old and by those of modern times.

There are various frescoes in other rooms of the old palace ; but the most interesting are downstairs in the chapel of the prison, now an office for the Attorney of the Commune, who most appropriately sits under the effigy of the patron saint of all lawyers, St. Ives. This fresco is attributed to Sodoma, and is worthy of his hand. St. Ives is seated, hearing cases, and widows, orphans and beggars are imploring him to see that justice should be done. Two angels uphold the arms of the Machiavelli family, from which we may infer that it was painted in 1507, when Messer Giovan Battista Machiavelli was *podestà*. On the opposite wall is an inferior fresco, much damaged, with allegorical figures of Truth, Prudence, and Falsehood, the latter writhing under the foot of a seated and grave-looking judge. In one corner is written :—

“ Per quel che pecha l’huõ per quel patisce,  
Cava tu, verità, a la bugia  
La falsa lingua, qual sempre mentisce.” \*

The small courtyard into which this room opens is wonderfully picturesque. A *loggia*, with traces of painting,

The barren weed must be rooted out ere it spreads. And as these maxims are preserved (by being inscribed) upon these public seats, so do ye, O citizens, as you revere Silvius, keep them for ever in your hearts.”

\* For his sins, man suffers.  
Tear thou out, truth, from falsehood  
The false tongue, which ever lies.”

runs round three sides on the first floor, upheld by slender columns, and an old well stands on one side. The high tower was begun ten years after the palace, in 1298, owing to a quarrel between the Council of the People and the priest of the adjacent Collegiate Church about ringing the bells. So the Council determined to have their own bell-tower, and each *podestà* added to its height, affixing their arms to the piece built by them. It is 172½ feet high, and rests on a large arch; though it has been struck by lightning eleven times, it does not appear to have suffered.

The Collegiate Church stands at right angles to the Municipal Palace high above the piazza; a flight of twenty-five steps leads up to the doors, and, though much spoilt by successive alterations, traces of the original design by Matteo Brunisemd in 1239 are still apparent. The dim religious light of the fine interior is only sufficient to enable one to see that all the walls are frescoed. Benozzo Gozzoli, the great Florentine artist, painted the fresco of the martyrdom of St. Sebastian between the doors,—*Ad laudem gloriosissimi athlete Sancti Sebastiani*. Paradise and hell are depicted on the side-walls by Taddeo Bartolo, of Siena (1393); very quaint is the punishment of the gluttons, who sit round a sumptuously spread table, while hideous demons prevent them from stretching forth their hands to reach the food. The roof is azure blue, with gold stars, and frescoes



by Domenico da Firenze (? Ghirlandajo) Pier Francesco di Bartolomeo, also a Florentine, and Sebastiano Mainardi, of San Gimignano. The nave on the left is frescoed by Bartolo di Fredi, of Siena (1356), but modern restoration has injured his work terribly. Opposite are scenes from the New Testament by Berna da Siena, who fell from the scaffolding and was killed in 1380. Giovanni da Ascanio, his pupil, completed the work. "The people of San Gimignano were greatly attached to Berna, and buried him with considerable pomp," says Vasari, "not ceasing for many months to hang laudatory epitaphs in Latin and in the vulgar tongue round his tomb, the men of that town being much addicted to letters." Indeed, the quantity of inscriptions, epitaphs, and proverbs painted and sculptured in every conceivable place in the little town is astonishing.

The chief ornament of the church is the lovely chapel of Santa Fina, with frescoes by Ghirlandajo. Fina de' Ciardi was born of noble but very poor parents, and lost her father in early childhood. Her great beauty and charm of manner attracted universal admiration; but she was extremely devout, and, falling ill, chose to lie on a narrow board, without mattress or covering, so that at last her flesh adhered to the wood. On her mother's sudden death, a charitable Donna Bonaventura took charge of her and her nurse, and soon afterwards St. Gregory appeared to the young girl in a dream and



announced her approaching death. On the 12th of March, 1253, the bells rang a solemn peal untouched by human hands, and round the hard couch sprang up yellow wallflowers, *fiore di Santa Fina*, which to this day crown the towers of San Gimignano with a golden glory. Fina was dead ; but, before burial, she raised her hand, and a blind deacon opened his eyes and saw, while her nurse Beldia regained her lost health. Other miracles followed, and in 1325 it was decided to build a chapel in honour of the youthful saint. Political events and the plague delayed the execution of this decision until 1465, when Giuliano da Majano was called from Florence to design the chapel. The beautiful altar of white marble is one of the finest works of Benedetto da Majano ; unfortunately, the sarcophagus which contained the bones of Santa Fina was removed in 1738 to make room for a new one, and now stands in the oratory of St. John. The two frescoes by Ghirlandajo are very lovely : to the right, St. Gregory announces to the sick girl her approaching death, and in the clouds is her soul borne aloft by angels ; opposite is her funeral, and the hand of the dead saint is raised towards the blind deacon. Up in the tower in the background sits an angel tolling the bell, to commemorate the mysterious ringing of bells at the death of Fina. Sebastiano Mainardi, pupil and brother-in-law of Ghirlandajo, painted the roof of the chapel, which has been spoiled by

restoration. In the sacristy is a wonderfully lifelike bust, also by Benedetto, of Pietro Onofrio, who in 1463 was elected by his fellow-citizens controller of the works of the church *for life*, an unheard-of honour, due to "his well-known and tried honesty and capacity; he died amid universal tears of grief in 1488, and his funeral was attended by a great concourse of people in St. Domenico, who saluted him as the Father of the Poor."

From the church door the view of the small square is striking. To the right, rises the majestic Palazzo del Podestà with its rounded windows, iron balcony, and immense tower; on the left, the slender twin towers of the Ardinghelli, the great family whose quarrels with the Salvucci were an incessant source of trouble to their native city, still look down on the spot where, in August, 1352, the two handsome sons of Gualtiero degli Ardinghelli were beheaded by order of Messer Benedetto degli Strozzi, of Florence, captain of the people, who espoused the cause of the Salvucci. Opposite is the original Municipal Palace, with its immense *loggia*, where justice was administered, and its high tower, called La Rognosa until 1407, when a clock was placed in it, and it became Dell' Oriolo. By an ancient edict, no tower belonging to any private person was allowed to exceed in height La Rognosa (160 feet). After the erection of the other palace, this edifice was devoted to the reception of

foreigners of distinction who visited San Gimignano. Now it has been turned into a theatre.

Turning to the left, we strolled down the picturesque streets, and seeing a long, low arch at the end of a lane, walked towards it and came to the small church of San Jacopo, commonly called "Il Tempio." Tradition says that a Messer Ruggiero Baccinelli, with others from San Gimignano, went to the first Crusade, and returning thence laden with treasure, about 1096 built a palace and church for the Knights Templar. These latter, rendering themselves odious to the people, were turned out, their palace pillaged and destroyed, and their lands and church given to the Knights of Malta. Now San Jacopo belongs to the nunnery opposite, and the nuns pass over the covered archway unseen to hear Mass from the latticed windows in the ancient church, all covered with faded frescoes of the thirteenth century.

Ivy and clematis hung in garlands from the arch, and as we passed under it a splendid panorama burst on our sight. To the left was the convent of Monte Uliveto, the townlet of Marcialla crowned the nearest hill, and Vico, a small yellow-grey-walled village, looked almost like an opal in the sun's rays. On the second range of hills lay Linari, and more to the right, surrounded with black cypresses, rose the tall campanile of San Leuchese ; still further away was Pietra Fitta, and a villa and large park belonging to Amedeus, Duke of Aosta,

made a dark spot on the slope of the hill. The busy little town of Colle di Val d'Elsa was more to the right still, and all around range after range of pearl-grey and lilac hills melted away into the far distance. At our feet was green sward, and a shepherdess with her flock of goats and sheep passed slowly along, plying her distaff and singing in a sweet minor key about a knight who met a shepherdess and warned her of a wolf. She laughed at his warning; but the wolf swallows her pet kid, and she begs the knight to pierce the brute's stomach with his glittering sword, promising to give him wool and goat's hair when she shears her flock. The knight says he is no merchant of wool or cloth, but that for one kiss of love from her sweet mouth he will do her bidding. The kid jumps out of the wolf's stomach into his mistress's arms, and all ends joyfully. Pear and cherry trees were in full bloom, glistening like new-fallen snow in the bright sun; while at our backs rose the irregular houses and tall towers of San Gimignano and the old convent walls all aglow with Santa Fina's golden flowers, which scented the air and attracted butterflies and bees in swarms.

Not far from the Templars' church is St. Agostino, ugly enough outside, but containing many fine pictures, and, above all, the delightful frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli, which cover the whole choir. In seventeen compartments he has represented the life of St. Augustine, from

his first whipping by the schoolmaster of Tegaste to his death. We sat entranced by the *naïveté* and fun in the earlier scenes of the career of Augustine, while yet a sinner, as well as by the beauty of the compositions after his conversion; every head must have been done from life and *con amore*. The same artist painted the fine fresco of St. Sebastian holding out his cloak to shield the pious San Gimignanesi from the plague of 1464. Close to this altar is a curious tombstone of the Benzi family; a skeleton, with the words *ibi, ubi*, and at the four corners, *nasci horror: vivere labor: mori dolor: resurgere decor*. Opposite is an altar dedicated to the favourite saint of this part of the world, Bartolo, son of Giovanni Buonpedoni, Count of Mucchio, and of Gentina, his wife. As a child, he was so amiable and charming that his companions named him "Angelo di pace" (angel of peace); in old age, he was called the Tuscan Job, from the patience with which he bore the horrible leprosy which afflicted him for twenty-two years. Bartolo died in 1299, aged seventy-two, and, by his desire, was buried in St. Agostino. So many miracles were worked at his tomb, particularly on possessed persons, that a railing was placed round it in 1359 for safety, and in 1488 the commune of San Gimignano determined to set aside the product of the grist tax for three years in order to erect a chapel worthy of his fame, and Benedetto da Majano was charged with the work. On the front of the marble sarcophagus is a



bronze slab with the words, *Ossa Divi Bartoli Gemini-anensis malorum geniorum fugatoris*, and on either side is sculptured an angel; below, in the "dossale" of the altar, are seated statuettes of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and a predella, with scenes from the life of St. Bartolo. Above the sarcophagus is a lovely roundel, an alto-relievo of the Madonna and Child, in a rich frame of cherubs' heads, flowers, and leaves. Two exquisitely sculptured angels stand in front, adoring the Virgin; on either side is a candelabrum of fine design; while from the arch above a curtain of white marble, delicately arabesqued in gold, hangs in folds so light that one could fancy it moved with the draught from the open door.

Many are the churches and convents in San Gimignano, and all contain fine pictures or frescoes, or sculpture; but we were bent on seeing the view from the Rôcca di Montestaffoli, the castle built in 1354 by order of the Florentines after they had subjugated San Gimignano. High behind the Collegiate Church we climbed a rough road towards the ruin, and found ourselves on the threshing-floor of a peasant's house. We were welcomed by a smiling *contadina* with several pretty children, one of whom was despatched to find Gigino to show us the way. A handsome young fellow came out of the stable and led us through the house, upstairs and downstairs, into the orchard, which covers about a quarter of a mile, and was once the courtyard of the



castle. The machicolated walls are high, here and there interrupted by round towers, now used for storing hay, straw, beans, and agricultural implements. In the centre was a huge well, with a narrow neck and sides sloping outwards, all covered with a trellis of peaches and vines. We mounted to the top of the largest tower, and were well rewarded for our climb. Towards the north, was the Capucine Convent, surrounded with grey walls and dark cypresses; further back lay the town of Gambasso; and in the far distance the two tall towers of San Miniato al Tedesco, a landmark for sixty miles round, stood out dark against the sky. Certaldo, the birthplace of

“Him who form’d the Tuscan’s siren tongue,”

was pointed out to us with pride by the peasant lad, and then a purple-black storm-cloud swept up, hiding the distant hills and towers and grey townlets, while in front the sun gilded the white villas. We turned southwards, and saw another storm rising, and in a few moments the rival clouds hurtled and crashed together, and a thunderbolt fell straight as an arrow towards Colle. Gigino crossed himself and muttered a prayer, while we were lost in admiration at the play of light and shade on the rolling landscape, and on the weatherbeaten towers of San Gimignano lit up with brilliant patches of yellow on their summits, where St. Fina’s flower was in full bloom. Below us were the grey, crumbling walls of the old fortress, garlanded with ivy and clematis, and fringed with irises,

wallflowers, and peach-blossom ; where once was fighting and bloodshed, the peaceful olives shimmered silver-bright as their slender branches were tossed hither and thither by the storm-wind, and at their feet the gladioli were just showing pink flowers and the grass was thick with star-like daisies.

We found an excellent dinner at the primitive little inn, next door to the Municipal Palace, and some of the Vernaccia wine, celebrated by Redi in his popular poem, "Bacco in Toscana."

"Se vi è alcuno, a cui non piaccia  
La Vernaccia  
Vendemiata in Pietrafitta,  
Interdetto,  
Maladetto,  
Fugga via dal mio cospetto."\*

We had remarked what a fine face the old hostess had, and she told us that she was the last descendant of Michael Angelo Buonarotti. Bitterly did she complain that her great-uncle had left all his patrimony to the city of Florence to keep up the Michael Angelo Museum. "If he had left me only a few thousand francs I might have made *such* an inn. I have written to Umberto, the king, to beg him to lend me two thousand francs, to make my place worthy of the strangers who come. You see we were such simple folk in the old days, and

\* "If there is any one who does not like Vernaccia vintaged at Pietrafitta, interdicted, cursed, let him fly from me."

now people are very luxurious. But he has not answered me," added she, with a sigh. We were, however, very comfortable, and the whole Giusti family did their best to entertain us, even getting us the municipal box at the theatre for four shillings, where we saw *La porteuse de pain*, in Italian, very well given. The principal actress had been with Salvini in London, playing Desdemona to his Othello. We retired to rest at midnight, but the rank and fashion of San Gimignano did not leave the theatre till past two.

Next day we drove to Volterra, quoting Swinburne's beautiful lines as we left the old town behind us:—

“ And far to the fair south-westward lightens,  
Girdled and sandaled and plumed with flowers,  
At sunset over the sun-lit lands,  
The hillside's crown where the wild hill brightens,  
Saint Fina's town of the beautiful towers,  
Hailing the sun with a hundred hands.”



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA



C. Pro:

THE BATHS OF CASCIANA.



## THE BATHS OF CASCIANA IN JULY.

ALL the *forestieri* (strangers) have flown north, for my countrymen have a knack of leaving Italy just before she is clothed in her full beauty. June, when it does not rain, is a lovely month. The hay has been got in, and the fields are all bright with fresh, green grass; the corn is turning golden yellow, and waiting for the 24th of June, before which day no well-thinking Tuscan—who all worship St. John, the protecting saint of Florence, most devoutly; chiefly, I believe, on account of the fireworks and fun which celebrate his day in the City of Flowers—ever thinks of reaping. Many a *baroccio*, piled high with openwork baskets and boxes full of yellow and rose-coloured cocoons, is met, going from the various *fattorie* or farms to the silk-mills at Pescia. The fireflies glint and glance all over the country, causing the moon to look pale, and in the daytime the *cicale* buzz and drum from every tree.

On the 1st of July we left Florence for Pontedera—a clean, prosperous little town on the Pisan line of railway—where we found a wonderful ramshackle carriage

awaiting us. The *procaccia*, or carrier, of the Bagni di Casciana, imagined that English people could not stand the sun, and so had brought a kind of enormous square box on wheels, which went at a capital pace along the excellent road, as smooth as a bowling-green, in the valley of the little river Era.

At the village of Ponsacco one leaves the high-road and strikes up towards the hills. In old times Ponsacco was a fortified town, and in 1363 was taken, during the wars between Pisa and Florence, by the Florentines, after a desperate resistance. It reverted, however, to its old ruler, and in 1406 stood another siege, and capitulated, with military honours, to Florence, who governed it mildly and increased its prosperity. But, according to the old proverb, *Fiorentini ciechi, Pisan traditori, Senesi matti, Lucchesi signori* (The Florentines are blind, the Pisans traitorous, the Sienese mad, and the Lucchese fine gentlemen), the Pisans sent a certain Ser Niccolò Piccinino to raise the population against their new masters, who were nearly all murdered. Florence, furious at this insult, marched with a large force against Ponsacco and again took it, after a tremendous fight. The Council of Pisa, many of whose members had possessions in the valley of the Era, called the Venetians to their aid and re-conquered the place. They, however, took the precaution of dismantling the fortress, and throwing down the walls, and were left in

quiet possession until the times of the Medici, when Ferdinando gave Ponsacco, with the fine Medicean villa of Camugliano, to the Marquis Filippo Niccolini, one of his devoted courtiers.

The fields are cultivated like a market-garden, and the crops of corn, maize, hemp, flax, and vines were most luxuriant. The canes grew from eight to ten feet high, stout and vigorous, while the mulberry-trees are all pollarded at four feet from the ground, and in many places formed hedges. We gradually rose to five hundred feet above the sea, which is about twenty miles away, and one feels the influence of the sea-breeze in the delicious, cool, invigorating air. The banks and hedges were ablaze with wild roses, honeysuckle, a brilliant chrome-yellow chrysanthemum, large white convolvulus, and a mallow with mauve-pink flowers of most graceful growth.

A nine miles' drive through this laughing landscape brought us to the Baths of Casciana, known to the Romans as a health-restoring place.

Bagno di Casciana is a small village with a piazza, where stands the Casino and a church, Sta. Maria de Aquis, which existed as a priory in 823; it has been, however, so often repaired that little of the ancient structure is left. In old times the place was called *Castrum de Aquis*, or *ad Aquas*, and afterwards *Bagni d'Acqui*, till some forty years ago its name was changed

by an edict of the municipal council of Lari to Bagni di Casciana, thus coupling it with the little town of Casciana, which is on the hill about two miles away, and whose inhabitants most cordially dislike the people of the Bagni, who return their hatred with interest.

Bagno d'Acqui (or di Casciana) is mentioned in various ancient documents, chiefly belonging to Volterra and to the Abbey of Morrona, which was founded in 1089 by Ugoccione, son of Count Guglielmo Bulgaro and of the Countess Cilia, and given to the order of the Camaldoli, together with all the land, streams, and aqueducts lying between the Sora and the Caldana. Twenty years after this the sons of Ugoccione increased the donation, and made over to the monks half of the land in the district of the Corte Aquisana, and *Vivaja cum aquis and acqueductibus*, etc.; so that the baths came into the possession of the Church in 1109. The convent of the Badia held this large extent of country until 1135, when the Abbot Gherardo sold to Uberto, Archbishop of Pisa, part of the hill, and the castle and district of Acqui called Vivaja. In 1148 Pope Eugenius III. confirmed Guidone, Abbot of Morrona, in all his privileges, and in the possession of what remained of the district of the Corte Aquisana, of the baths and aqueducts as far as the Cascina (*Balneum et aquæductus usque in Casinam*). In 1152 the Abbot Jacopo of Morrona sold the possessions of Montevaso and Montanino to the Archbishop

of Pisa, to raise funds for building the monastery of Morrona, which still exists, and in 1316 the Abbot Silvester d'Anghiari added the cloisters. The abbey church is of far more ancient date, and possesses a quaint picture, said to be anterior to Cimabue.

In 1482 the monastery was suppressed in spite of the opposition of the Camaldolese order, and all their possessions were bestowed on the bishops of Volterra, who had long hankered after them, and who turned the monastery into a dwelling-house and the church into a private oratory.

Popular tradition assigns the foundation of the baths to the famous Countess Mathilde, guided to the place by her pet hawk, who had lost his feathers, and regained them after dipping in the waters. In 1311 the Republic of Pisa ordered the baths to be re-built, and, with some modifications, they existed till seventeen years ago, when the present Casino and baths were erected. Formerly the men bathed in the basin of the warm spring itself, and from thence the water overflowed to the women's bath, losing a considerable portion of heat in the transit. The lepers' bath was further off, and last came a place for horses. The women rebelled against using the water after the men, and petitioned to be allowed to bathe all together, if a dress *per tutelare la decenza* (for the tutelage of decency) was worn. This was refused, but the basin where the



mineral water comes bubbling up out of the earth was divided in half by boards, and thus the women were placed on an equality with the men.

Now there are good baths of white marble, with an incessant stream of water direct from the spring always flowing, a doctor is in attendance, and the whole thing is comfortable and well arranged.

In the Archives of Florence there is a very amusing document, dated 7th September, 1575, and emanating from *Li Magnifici Signori Nove Conservatori della Jurisdizione et Dominio Fiorentino*, who were very irate at the disorder and inconvenience which arose because the inhabitants of Bagno ad Acqua did not observe the statutes drawn up, had no care of the baths, and did not prevent the insolence practised by evil-minded persons, who went to the said baths more to air their caprices than for any need of curing aches and pains. The said magistrates, seeing that the Divine Majesty and nature had bestowed such a treasure on their dominions as these most salubrious baths, desire that all men should aid in maintaining them unsullied from every kind of evil custom and insolence practised by the aforesaid people, who only sought amusement, etc.

The ancient tower, part of which is still inhabited by poor people, at Petraja, as the upper portion of Bagno di Casciana is called, was doubtless part of the Castello di Acqui, chief centre of the district Corte Aquisana,



which existed in 1090, before which date no records exist, they having perished in a fire, following a pestilence which occurred about that time.

One skirts round the cluster of small cottages surrounding the old tower, on the winding road from Bagno di Casciana up to the ruin of the castle of Parlascio on the summit of the hill. It is a good climb, but the road is, as usual, excellent. Leaving Vivaja on the right, a quaint little hillock, on which stood a church which was utterly destroyed by the earthquake of 1846, one passes under some fine chestnut and cherry trees. The undergrowth is fern and heather, and the yellow tiger-lilies glowed in the broken sunlight.

Parlascio is a huge bluff of rock, rising sheer out of the hill. On a plateau near the summit is a little church and three or four cottages. A marble head with a Gothic inscription is let into the wall on the right hand of the church door, and on the other a long Gothic inscription surrounds a small bas-relief of a bishop. As a handsome *contadina* told me :—

“*Ah! poverini, sono morti tanti anni fa; erano sacerdoti*” (Ah! poor things, they died many years ago; they were priests).

The view from the platform of rock on which the little church stands is magnificent. To the left Monte Moro, behind which lies Leghorn, stands out black against the sky; and the sea, with here and there a white sail glinting

in the sun, stretches far away. Pisa, with the Carrara mountains behind, lies in the soft green plain, and in front is a curious, broken landscape, rounded, water-washed hillocks, each crowned by a grey townlet with its tall campanile; the haze caused by the heat made the whole land look like a large opal. The nearest grey town is Morrona, standing on the peak of a hill, near which, further along the ridge, lies the abbey, now the villa of a rich Livornese. To the far right Volterra rears her weather-beaten towers to the sky, perched on the extreme edge of a high hill like an eagle's nest.

Behind the church a steep little path leads up to the summit of the ancient castle of Parlascio, whose ruins are now covered by a vineyard. All memory of its history has vanished from among the peasantry, and I could find no mention of it prior to the thirteenth century in the archives of the Abbey of Morrona. Over the door of the church is an inscription, saying that it was consecrated on the 26th May, 1444 (Pisan style), and built by the Counts of Upezzinghi of Pisa, lords of the castle.

We skirted the top of a long ridge of hills and drove through, or rather round Casciana, to Lari, the seat of the pretor, or magistrate, and of the municipal council, and chief place of the commune. Lari is a nice little town, perched on the top of a hill; and out of the centre of the market-place rises a quadrangular castle, built of red brick. The massive walls, rising at an acute angle,

stand frowning some hundred feet above one, perfectly smooth—no bastion, no tower, breaks the line.

In 1067 Lari is mentioned in a judicial sentence given at Pisa as a Corte and castle of Gottfredo, Marchese di Toscana. It must then have become Pisan, as the people of Lari took part in the rising against the Republic of Pisa in 1164, who sent a small army to enforce obedience. In 1230 the Upezzinghi retired there from their possession of Mazzamgamboli, and it is believed that they built the first castle on the summit of the hill, afterwards considerably enlarged and strengthened. It appears that they made over to the Archbishop of Pisa all their rights over Lari, for in 1375 the inhabitants deliberated that it was most inconvenient to hire a house every six months for the Captain of the Colle Pisane, or Pisan Hills, who came to distribute justice, so they determined to buy a residence for that purpose.

Lari and its dependencies came into the possession of the Republic of Florence in 1406, at the same time as Pisa; but for a long period the Grand Dukes of Tuscany paid a small annual tribute to the Pisan Archbishop. The governors of Lari after that time were called *Vicario*, and the first Florentine who held the office was Angelo di Giovanni da Uzzano.

On the south side of the castle a flight of ninety-five steps leads up to the gateway of the courtyard; half-way is a large cistern, hollowed out of the rock, decorated

with the Pitti and Della Scala arms, made in 1448 for the public benefit. The courtyard is very picturesque; an old well is at one end, and the walls of the houses are covered with escutcheons and coats-of-arms of the various *Vicarii*. Several famous Florentine names are there, their arms done in Della Robbia ware, and surrounded by the well-known wreaths of fruit and flowers. Rinuccini, Peruzzi, Capponi and Della Stufa recalled the supremacy of the old Republic; and above all were the balls of the Medici, ever-present on anything grand or interesting in Tuscany.

It is recorded that, in 1414, the Vicario Niccolò di Roberto Davanzati, ancestor of Bernardi, whose translation of Tacitus is celebrated, reformed the communal statutes. In 1523 Jacopo di Bongiann Gianfigliazzi was the *Vicario*, and at a later date the following macaronic lines were inscribed under his escutcheon:—

“Ero casa caduca, abietta e vile,  
 Minacciavo rovina ad ogni vento,  
 In me non era loggia nè cortile,  
 Ma ogni cosa piena di spavento.  
 Or surgo come casa signorile,  
 Non fu dal ciel favor mai tardo o lento,  
 Per grazia d’esso nobil Gianfigliazzo,  
 Di vil tugurio divento palazzo.”

(“I was a fallen house, abject and vile,  
 Threatening ruin with every wind;  
 I possessed no colonade, nor courtyard,  
 And everything was full of horror.

Now I rise like a noble house,  
Ne'er did the favour of Heaven come too late.  
By your grace, noble Gianfigliazzo,  
From a vile hole I became a palace.")

The writer of this must have overlooked the distich under the Della Robbia arms of Bartolomeo Capponi, who was *Vicario* in 1525:—

“Temporis et muri sævas subitura ruinas  
Transtulit intutum signa benignus amor.  
Qui struxit fastu longe, remotis ab omni  
Nomine Capponius Bartholomeus erat.”

(“With great love he rendered safe these walls, which threatened instant ruin. Bartholomew Capponi, for such was his name, was the man who had this thought, without seeking for fame.”)

In 1524 Alessandri di Pietro di Mariotto was *Vicario*, and his arms are repeated on a most lovely altar-piece by Luca Della Robbia in the little chapel. It represents the Virgin and Child and an angel, and is surrounded by a splendid garland of flowers and fruit. The garrulous old *custode* showed us the prisons—very ghastly places—and opening a postern door, took us to an outside walk all around the top of the castle walls. We then saw that the houses in the courtyard were mere shells, only containing one room in depth, and we looked down the dizzy height into the tortuous streets below, and beyond over the sunny plain at Pisa, whose leaning tower could be distinctly seen.

Sun-dials are frequent on the farmhouses, and some



had most poetical conceits written around or over them. Profoundly sad is—*Segno le ore sì, ma non piu quelle* (I mark the hours, 'tis true, but no longer those gone by). *Per i felici ed i tristi, segno ugualmente le ore* (For the happy and the sad, I equally mark the hours), is also pretty, but less original and terse.

Next day we drove through Soianella and Soiana up to Morrone, a grey, old-world, weather-beaten place, with no traces of its ancient splendour left. Under the walls of Soiana Pier Capponi fell—the contemporary and friend of Savonarola, and one of the most strenuous defenders of Florentine liberties against the Medici. He is famous for his answer to Charles VIII. of France, who tried to conquer Florence, and to obtain from her large sums of money when on his road to Naples in 1493. To the threats of the King, Pier Capponi proudly replied—

“*Voi suonerete le vostre trombe, noi suoneremo le nostre campane*” (You may sound your trumpets, we will sound our bells).

The fortifications have long since vanished, but these small villages are picturesque enough, the stairs being outside the houses, and various small *loggie* and balconies making deep patches of shade, where the inhabitants sit at their work. The views were magnificent, particularly from the high platform on which stands the small church of Morrone, rising some five hundred feet



above the plain, built where in ancient times stood the castle.

Geologically, the whole country is extremely interesting. Here and there blue-grey cliffs rise perpendicularly, *apropos* to nothing at all, one hundred or more feet out of the red earth, and the roads are in some places formed of the remains of huge oyster shells and queer fossils. The *contadini* are pleasant and civil in manner, delighted to tell one the names of the various villages and towns, and evidently unused to visitors. Our advent at Morrona caused quite a commotion, and, as we stood near the church, admiring the panoramic view, I had a circle of small children sitting on their heels, staring open-mouthed, while their mothers smiled and hoped I did not mind such bad manners. *E un gran divertimento per loro* (It is a great amusement for them).

Some of the girls are strikingly beautiful—very dark, with jet-black hair, fine eyes, and delicate features. The men, too, are good looking, and have small and curiously round heads. They have a frank, nice way about them, and, though terribly poor, will show the very little there is to see in their villages with a graceful kindness of manner quite deprecating the idea of being paid for their trouble.

From Morrona we went on to Terricciola, a clean townlet with houses which had once seen better days. The church, a fine red-brick building, has been spoiled,

and they were adding a chapel on to one side, thus destroying the little that was left of the old building. The piazza and the church occupy the site of the ancient castle, which was taken and retaken several times during the wars between Florence and Pisa. Over the door of the sacristan's cottage was built into the wall the front of rather a fine Etruscan cinerary urn, with a reclining female figure above, and *un Pagano con animali* (a Pagan with animals), as the old man carefully explained it to be, underneath, which had been dug up there long ago.

From Terricciola we descended a winding road into the valley of the Cascina, and skirted the base of the bare, water-washed hill on which stands the monastery of Morrone, an enormous square edifice built around a courtyard, with some fine trees near it. The olives grow to a large size all over this part of Tuscany, the *tufa* soil suiting them well. There is a tradition that an underground passage connects the monastery with the Villa of San Marco, the residence of the bishop of the diocese. All the country around is tunnelled with caves, and at Terricciola the farmers still keep their grain in the old *buche di grano*, or corn cisterns, hollowed out of the rock. The stone-cutters, whose name is legion, have a way of breaking the stones into long slabs, used as supports to the *pergole* of vines, which I never saw before. They cut a slight channel in the stone and insert flakes of iron ;

between these are placed wedges, and then the man gives little taps with a hammer, very much as though he were playing on a gigantic *gigliera*, to the long row of wedges. On a sudden the stone gives a hollow sigh and starts asunder. Petrified shells and plants are of frequent occurrence in the rock, and some are very fine.

Reaping is also different here from other parts of Tuscany. The *contadini* cut off the ears of corn with a sickle in small handfuls, leaving two or three feet of straw standing, which is afterwards mown with scythes. An old peasant, seeing me watch his operations, ceased work for a moment, and, with a twinkle in his eye, quoted, like a true Tuscan who knows and loves his old proverbs:—

“*La sa, Signora, ‘Quando il grano è ne’ campi, È di Dio e de’ Santi’*” (You know, ma’am, “When the corn is in the field, it belongs to God and the saints”).

The *contadini* work hard; in the fields at daylight—they often do not return home till nine in the evening; and we met women and young girls staggering under huge loads of green grass, cut on the hills and carried down on their heads, after the day’s work, to sell for a few centimes in the village. This habit of carrying jars of water, baskets of fruit, and bundles of fodder on the head, gives the *contadine* an easy, graceful walk, recalling the peculiar swing of the Arab women. The men just now look very spruce and neat, as a new straw hat and,

if possible, a new shirt, is "the thing" before reaping. The women never wear hats; they tie a handkerchief under the chin, and pull it over their eyes like a hood, folding another several times thick on the top of their heads, to keep off the sun.

To the east of Bagno di Casciana, on the Colle Montanine, rises a steep hill, called the "Rocca della Contessa Mathilde," and of course said to have been one of her castles. It is rather fatiguing to get at, as, after a two miles' drive up hill, one has to walk another mile and a half up a rough road to the foot of the "Rocca," which rises like half a huge apple out of the very top of the line of hills. The view from the summit was magnificent; for forty miles and more one sees the country on every side, and while we were standing entranced with the landscape, an inky-black cloud suddenly swept up from no one knew where, and blotted Volterra entirely out of sight, while the thunder growled ominously, and the wind rose. It was a most impressive sight, particularly when suddenly the clouds rolled asunder and a flash of lightning shot as straight as a plumper's line down to the earth. We expected a drenching, but the storm disappeared as quickly as it had risen, and after inspecting the remains of two small round towers, a wall about three feet high with traces of a curtain wall beyond, and settling in our own minds that the great countess certainly never lived in such an eagle's nest, we wended

our way down hill to the carriage. One does not see a human creature all the way; the only sign of civilization was a pile of sacks filled with oak bark, awaiting the donkeys who alone could face such a path. The butterflies are numerous and very beautiful. There was a large orange fellow flitting about whose wings faded off to lemon yellow; another, very big, was the colour of a magpie's wing, blue-black shot with green; and one was very odd, as it seemed to fly the wrong way, having two tails to the hind wings which looked like antennæ. I am afraid my description is most unscientific; all I noticed was the great variety of butterflies and, moths, and their colours, so gorgeous in the brilliant sunlight.

Bagni di Casciana can be reached also from Fauglia, on the Maremma line, about the same distance as Pontedera, but a more hilly drive. Fauglia is a bright, clean place, with fine villas and country-houses in and near it. A picturesque old church, on the outskirts of the town, stands on the very end of a small hill; its elegant campanile, rather Lombard in style, is fast going to ruin, having been struck by lightning and shaken by the earthquake of 1846. From Fauglia one descends through a gorge clothed with stunted oak, chestnut, and nut copse; fern, tall Mediterranean heather, gum cistus and anisette forming the undergrowth, with the familiar yellow broom and gorse, into the valley of the Tora, a small, brawling stream, crossed by a good bridge. From there begins a



three-mile hill, up a capital road, across a queer, bare country, with great fissures and rents in it, as though it had been torn with a large rake. Much land has been reclaimed and put under vine-cultivation. The waste land is overgrown with lentisk and wild myrtle, which scented the warm air and glittered in the bright sun. Larks innumerable arose as we drove along, hovering like large moths high in the air, and singing aloud. To the right, lying on the slope of the hill, is the old castle of Gello Mattacino, lately restored and inhabited. There are records of a church there in the archives of Lucca as early as 764, and the castle used to be called Gello delle Colline, or, "of the hills," until a Florentine, Alessandro di Matteocini, bought it, and gradually his name was given to the castle and lands. A short dip brings us near to Casciana, and then another hill, into the Parlascio road, whence we bowled merrily down to the Baths.

Horses and carriages are good and wonderfully cheap. We had a capital mare, an open pony chaise which would have held four, and paid at the rate of fivepence a mile; the houses are fairly comfortable, and the chief administrator of the baths, Dr. Rimediotti, is most courteous and kind. We found the mineral baths quite as efficacious as Aix-les-Bains, and witnessed some really marvellous cures of rheumatism, gout, and paralysis. For the



information of any medical reader I give an analysis of the waters, made by a competent chemist :—

IN 300 LITRES.					Cubic centimètres.
Nitrogen	...	...	...	...	444,010
Carbonic acid	...	...	...	...	967,770
SALINE MATTERS, ETC.					Grammes.
Sulphate of lime	...	...	...	...	523'17
Carbonate of lime	...	...	...	...	100'35
Carbonate of magnesia	...	...	...	...	6'96
Carbonate of iron	...	...	...	...	1'02
Sulphate of magnesium	...	...	...	...	90'48
Sulphate of sodium	...	...	...	...	127'80
Chloride of sodium	...	...	...	...	7'80
Chloride of magnesia	...	...	...	...	5'40
Ammonium	...	...	...	...	0'45
Silica	...	...	...	...	11'55
Alumina	...	...	...	...	2'46
Organic matter	...	...	...	...	0'63
Residuum of complex composition	...	...	...	...	878'07
Pure water	...	...	...	...	Litres. 299'12
Density	...	...	...	...	1,003'02

Traces of lithia.

The water is quite limpid, and has a peculiarly soft feeling ; the skin feels almost slimy after remaining some time in the bath, and is stained slightly red, owing, I suppose, to the iron.

The maximum temperature of the water is 35°·20 (Centigrade) ; the minimum 33°·90.



THE  
UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO



LA GIOCONDA.

## *LA GIOCONDA.*

(A TRUE STORY.)

THE sun had just set behind the Apennines, leaving the high lands bathed in a golden light, while the clouds were deep blood-red and purple, and the plain was already plunged in darkness.

In the bright Tuscan land, the transition from day to night is far more rapid than in our northern clime; the mysterious charm of twilight lasts but a few moments.

The heat was oppressive, and a slight haze rose from the valleys, where the small brooks, which in winter become destructive torrents, trickled in slow, thin threads of silver towards the Arno, bordered by the graceful blue-green canes and by a row of tall poplars. The terraced vineyards stretched far away in regular lines, every plant bearing its wealth of golden or dark purple fruit, drinking up the heat given out by the baked earth—the very oaks seemed to be longing for a thunder-storm to wash the dust off their leaves.

A good-looking, stalwart young peasant, with wavy

chestnut hair, and a bright pleasant face, lit up by a pair of blue eyes, came slowly through the wood, his blue-and-white striped linen jacket thrown jauntily over one shoulder, as is the custom among the Tuscan peasantry. He was singing an old *rispetto*, which has been handed down from father to son, and is said to date from the seventeenth century:—

*Andantino.*



O Ron-di - nel - la . . che vai sul - lo  
O swal-low, swal - low, with these a be -

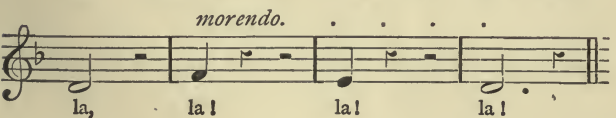
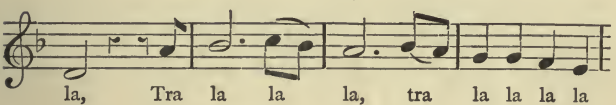
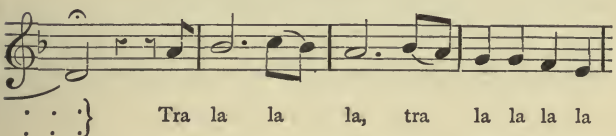
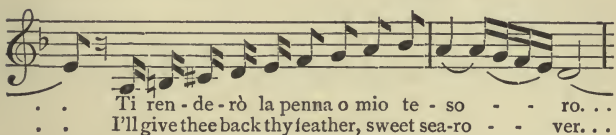
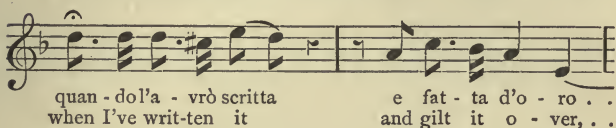
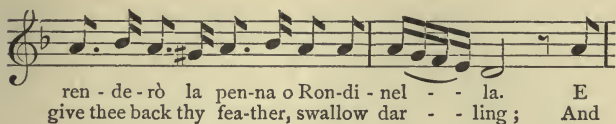
ma - - - re, Ti ri - lu - ce le pen - ne quan-do  
- neath . . . thee, How fair thy feathers shine, how free they

vo - le; Dam-mi una pen-na del - le tue bell'a - li,  
ho-ver; Give me one feather from thy wings, I pri-thee,

Vo' scri-ver un - a letter al mio a - mo - - - re.  
Fain would I write a let-ter to my lo - - - ver.

E quan-do l'av-rò scrit-ta e fat - ta bel - la, Ti  
And when I've written it and made it charm-ing, I'll





“Amor che passi la notte cantando.  
Ed io meschina stò nel letto e sento,  
Volto le spalle alla mia mamma e piango ;  
Di sangue son le lacrime che getto.  
Di là del letto ho fatto un grosso fiume,  
Da tanto lagrimar non vedo lume.

Di là dal letto un grosso fiume ho fatto,  
Da tanto lagrimar son cieca affato."

("O love, you pass, singing, while night is sleeping ;  
I, wretched I, lie on my bed and listen ;  
I to my mother turn my shoulders weeping ;  
Blood are the tears that on my pillow glisten.  
Beyond the bed I've set a broad stream flowing,  
With so much weeping I am sightless growing ;  
Beyond the bed I've made a flowing river ;  
With so much weeping I am blind for ever.") \*

Giulio was a peasant on the estate of a hard *padrone*, or landowner, who held to all the privileges and power still possessed by landowners in Tuscany. He had fallen in love with the only daughter of a peasant living some three miles away from the *podere*, or farm, where his own family had been for many generations, and the pretty, bright-eyed Gioconda fully returned his affection.

But the course of true love never runs smooth, and so it happened that the owner of Castel Poggio, where Gioconda's father, old Bettini, lived, objected to the match. He insisted on her marrying some young fellow who could leave his own family, and, as they say in Tuscany, "enter the house" of his wife and become one of her family. The Bettinis had lost their two sons in the wars for the union of Italy, and a son-in-law who could take the place of one of the dead lads was a *sine quâ non*. Nando Bettini was getting on in life, and his *padrone* spoke seriously to him on the subject ; either

\* The English version is by Mr. J. Addington Symonds.

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Gioconda must marry some one who would come and live with them, or they must leave the *podere*.

“Your fields are badly tilled, the pruning of the vines is always behindhand, and you are running into debt with me for corn. You spend your own small savings in paying hired labourers who scamp their work, and it cannot go on. Gioconda must marry and bring a husband into the house to help you. I will give you six months, for your family has been on the land for two hundred years, and I don't want to be hard on you. But I must pay my taxes, and if my land is not properly cultivated I cannot. This cursed Government does nothing but raise the taxes; soon we landowners shall be beggars.”

“But, Illustrissimo——”

“No, Nando, I can listen to no objections. You are going to tell me again about Giulio. It is of no use. I cannot force Count Selvi to let Giulio leave his own family; besides, you know the old feud existing between our families. We are not on speaking terms. You must find another husband for Gioconda. In my time, girls never fell in love. Nonsense! you tell her to be a dutiful daughter, and marry some young fellow who can help you, and has an eye for oxen.”

Poor old Nando went home with a heavy heart. He was devoted to his daughter, whose name, Gioconda, suited her well—small, but well-made, with an oval face,

and masses of dark-brown hair with golden light in it, very large dark-brown eyes, and a clear, dark complexion. She was one of the beauties of the neighbourhood. Gioconda's merry ringing laugh was the delight of old Nando's life. She knew more *stornelli* and *rispetti* and old proverbs than any other girl in the country round, and she never sang so well as when Giulio chimed in a second to her bird-like clear soprano with his rather harsh baritone.

Poor Giulio! He had been up to Castel Poggio to help old Bettini to yoke a young ox, it being a holiday, so that he was not wanted at home.

As the old man breasted the steep bit of road leading up to his farmhouse, which was perched on the crest of a hill, and still bore traces of having been fortified, he heard the two young people singing together as they cut the grass for the oxen on the slopes which kept up the narrow strips of land where the olives grew so well. It was a song Gioconda had learnt from her brothers before they left for the campaign whence they had never returned, and poor old Bettini's eyes filled with tears as he thought of his two bright boys who had quitted their home so full of hope, telling their mother that Austrian bullets would assuredly never harm them, as the good old priest, Don Raffaello, had told them to pray to Our Lady of Succour, and had given to each her picture, sewn up in a little bag of old red damask, to hang round their necks.

And now they were gone, and he was obliged to separate these two young people who were so happy, singing under the old grey olives. It was a merry lay and jarred painfully with the old man's sad thoughts.

*Allegretto.*

Be - ne - det - to chi ti fè, Fin da  
Bless-ed she who made you learn How to

pic - co-la im - pa - rar Del-la se - ta il bel mes -  
spin the silk - en thread, Where your pret - ty fin-gers

- tier, Che fa pro - prio in - amo - rar. Fior di  
turn, Out and in with white and red. Flow'r of

mag - gio lo mio amor, Che andò a far il mi - li -  
May and just one year, Free from barracks, back from

- tar, Quan-do tor - na sul o - nor, m'ha pro -  
town, You and I to - ge - ther, dear, Courting

- mes - so di spo - sar. . . .  
when the sun goes down. . . .

“ Si, Carluccio, il mio tesor,  
 Mi diceä che vuol amar,  
 Una giovine d'onor  
 Che la seta sappia far.  
 Giunga il giorno e presto fuor  
 Mi vedranno a passeggiar,  
 Abbracetto col mio amor  
 Che ha deciso di sposar.”

(“ Blessed she, and blessed hour,  
 Where I learnt the silken trade.  
 White and red, for wedding dower,  
 Coin by coin, like braid with braid.  
 Flow'r of May, and just one year,  
 When the lads are back with spring,  
 You and I together, dear,  
 When the nightingales shall sing.”)\*

Bettini called Giulio, who came bounding down the hill to meet him ; but all his gaiety vanished when he saw how grave and sad the old man looked.

“ Why, Padre Nando, what *is* the matter ? ”

“ A great deal, my son, a great deal. Things are all going wrong. The *padrone* has just declared that if Gioconda is not married in six months to some young man who can come and live with us, to help me, he will turn us off. I can't bear to think of my poor Elena having to beg her bread in her old age. It is now some thirty years that she has lived at Castel Poggio, and the children were all born there. So, Giulio, you must not come near us any more, and Gioconda must be a dutiful child and forget you.”

\* The English version is by Mr. Theo. Marzials.



Bettini tried to speak severely and with the authority becoming his years and his position as head of the family. But he failed signally. Knowing the deep attachment between Giulio and Gioconda, it wrung his heart to be obliged to separate them. Count Selvi, who owned the *podere* on which the family of Giulio lived, had the reputation of being a hard, cruel man, who had driven his wife mad by his ill-treatment. His children lived in terror of him, in the old villa on the hill.

They both felt that it would be useless to beg him to break through his rule of never allowing a peasant to leave the parental roof, unless there were too many men in the family for the land to support.

Giulio looked utterly miserable, but said, "You are right, Padre Nando, you must think first of the mother ; but, oh ! my poor little Gioconda !"

His voice failed him, and holding out his brown hand to the old man, who grasped it tight, he turned on his heel and slowly went down the hillside through the oak copse.

Gioconda had watched the scene from above, and came to meet her father, with her sickle in one hand, while with the other she caressed her special pet, the big white Maremma sheep-dog, Caro, who looked up into her face as though he understood all the thoughts that were passing through her mind.

How pretty she looked in her striped blue-and-red

cotton dress, a red handkerchief pinned coquettishly across her breast and one corner of her checked apron tucked into her girdle. The evening sun lit up her hair and seemed to kiss her smooth brown cheek. Old Nando could not help admiring his child.

“Padre, what have you said to Giulio that he should go away like that, without even saying *addio*; and who is to help me to carry up all this grass to the house?”

She tried hard to keep her voice steady as she spoke, and to prevent the tears from coming into her eyes.

“I will tell you afterwards, my child. I must see your mother first. Here, give me the big bundle, you can take the small one.”

Father and daughter toiled slowly up the hill with their loads of fresh-cut grass, and old Nando went into the stable to feed the oxen and shake down their litter for the night.

Gioconda meanwhile went upstairs to her mother, and said that her father had returned looking very sad, but refused to tell her what was the matter. “Only,” added Gioconda, blushing, “I am sure it is something about Giulio.”

The two old people sat up later than usual that night, and talked over the events of the day after their daughter had gone to bed.

Elena said bitterly, and with a sigh, “The poor should not have hearts. Gioconda is a good girl, and will do her

duty ; but it is a hard thing to ask a girl to give up her love."

When Giulio got home, he found his family in despair. A new levy had been called out, and it included his youngest brother, the Benjamin of his parents. His mother was in tears, as the recruits were to go to the Neapolitan provinces.

"Nothing-but brigands ; no decent bread, and wine that you might cut with a knife," wailed she. "It is far worse than marching against the Austrians. Those poor Bettinis lost both their sons ; but at least they fought strangers and usurpers. But now ! To send soldiers to do policemen's work ! They will all die ! I shall never see Settimio again ! *Madonna mia !* it will kill me."

Giulio rapidly made up his mind, and, calling his father out of the house, begged his permission to propose himself in the place of his youngest brother.

"The authorities will be sure to accept the exchange, as I am taller and far stronger than Settimio, and my mother will be less worried about me than she would about my brother. I cannot stay here, so near Castel Poggio, and know that my poor Gioconda will be obliged to marry some one else ; when I am gone, she may forget me. Will you go and see Count Selvi, and make it all right with him and the bailiff?"

In vain did his father remonstrate, Giulio bore down all opposition. His determination was announced to the

family, and the old man went to the villa on the hill and begged an interview.

He was ushered into the large, gloomy room where Count Selvi usually sat. The vaulted roof still bore traces of fresco and the doors and shutters of gilding; some fine old prints hung all awry in black and gold frames on the walls, and a portrait of the dead countess hung above the writing-desk. There was no scrap of carpet on the brick floor, and the high-backed, old-fashioned chairs stood in a row against the wall, rigid, stiff, and hard.

“What do you want?” said the count, in a harsh voice, which made the old peasant wish himself at home again.

“Signor Conte, my Giulio has begged me to come and ask your excellency’s permission to go as a substitute for his brother Settimio, who has drawn a bad number. My Giulio——”

“What! tired of being an honest peasant, and wants to see the world! This comes of all the new-fangled ideas and teaching people to read and write who ought to dig. What has he to complain of?”

“Nothing, Illustrissimo, only——” The old man stopped short, and twirled his hat round and round. He did not know how to explain to the stern *padrone* about Gioconda, as he knew of the old feud between the Selvi and the Nicolini.

“Well, go on, I can’t sit here all day,” growled the count.

“The truth is, signor Conte, my Giulio is in love, and, as he has no hope of marrying the girl, he would rather go as a soldier.”

“A pretty reason, truly!” sneered the count. “I never fell in love. The sooner he falls out of it again the better. He has enough to do to look after the cattle. I am not satisfied with your balance this year. Who is the girl?”

“The daughter of old Bettini, up at Castel Poggio,” answered the peasant timidly.

Count Selvi brought his clenched hand down on the table so hard that the room re-echoed to the blow.

“What! you permitted your son to have intercourse with peasants of the Nicolini! Bravo! I shall tell the bailiff to make up your account, and you can look out for another farm. Let your Giulio turn soldier or thief, it is all the one to me; only never let me see him or any of you again. Go!”

Old Martelli did not dare utter a word. With an awkward bow, he left the room, and, seeking the bailiff, who was a kind and honest man, as popular as his master was reverse, he begged him to try and intercede for them.

“We have belonged to the Selvi family for such long, long years,” said the old man, using the familiar, patri-

archal Tuscan way of speaking, "and you know how fond the poor Contessa was of my wife, when she came as a sweet young bride to this gloomy old villa, looking like a rose."

"No, no, Angelo, that would never do," answered the bailiff; "no one dares mention her name here. It is a bad business altogether, and if it were not for my young masters and the signorina—so like her mother, poor thing—I should leave to-morrow. This house is a hell upon earth. I will see what I can do some day, whenever the count is in a better humour."

Angelo Martelli went home, and could eat no supper. He said he felt as though he had seen the devil in person, and could not get the harsh voice of his *padrone* out of his ears.

"I told you how it would end, Giulio, when you first went to see Gioconda. We are in a pretty mess. Suppose we are all turned out, and that I can find no vacant farm. To become a day-labourer at my time of life is a poor look-out. However, the Madonna has always been kind, and she will provide for us," said the old man reverently.

The next week, Giulio duly presented himself to the syndic of his commune, and was accepted as substitute for his younger brother. In another ten days he would join the depôt of his regiment, pass the medical examination, and be drafted off to Sicily.



Gioconda was in a fever of expectation. She noticed how sad her parents looked, and that her mother often quoted old sayings about the short duration of first love and the duty of obedience ; but, as she rarely saw any neighbours, and only went to Mass with her mother on Sunday mornings, when Elena did not encourage idle conversation, she had not heard any rumour of Giulio's intentions. At last, to her infinite relief, he came up to Castel Poggio, and she received him pouting and trying to look offended ; but, at the sight of his grave face and altered manner, more like a father than a lover, all her little affectations vanished, and she sidled up to him, saying in a coaxing tone—

“Giulio mio, what have I done to offend you ? Ask mother, she will tell you how good I have been, and how I have longed to see you ; but Caro knows more of that, I tell him everything. Here, Caro, come here, old man, and salute Giulio, and wag your tail properly.”

But Giulio paid no attention to the dog's blandishments, who slunk away disappointed, and sat down with an air of “well, what is going to happen next ?”

“What *is* the matter with you, Giulio, and what have I done ?” reiterated Gioconda, with trembling voice.

“Nothing, my child,” he answered sadly, “only I am afraid you will think me cruel ; but it must be. You know how fond my mother is of Settimio ? Well, he has drawn a bad number for this new levy, and I——”

“You are not going too? Oh, Giulio! you cannot leave me? You are only joking, only trying to frighten me into telling you what you know so well already; that I love you—oh! so much.”

The poor girl broke down, and, hiding her face, burst into tears. Caro could not resist this, and, looking defiantly at Giulio, he sidled up to his young mistress, poking his nose under her arm, and whining to attract her attention.

“Gioconda, listen to me. Ask your parents whether they do not approve. I have taken Settimio’s place. You must try and forget me. God knows it is a hard trial for us; but we cannot bring ruin on both our families. You know what Count Selvi is, and your father will be sent away by his *padrone* if you do not marry. Ah! Gioconda, my darling, my darling, to think that I should have to say such words to you—to tell you to marry and forget me.”

“They said you never loved me, and now I see it! I don’t care for you one bit! Oh, Caro, Caro, why did you ever let him come to Castel Poggio?” sobbed Gioconda, sinking down on the grass, and throwing her arms round the shaggy neck of the big dog, who looked puzzled and very much inclined to fly at his old friend.

“Gioconda, my child, I swear I love you more than life; but duty goes before everything, and I promised

your father not to come here any more. That would be impossible if I remained near you. So I go."

Poor Giulio's firmness nearly forsook him, and his voice sounded strange and hollow. His blue eyes were sunken and his mouth quivered as he looked with infinite love on the girl crouching at his feet.

She rose at last, very pale and quiet, and, laying her hand on his arm, said, "Forgive me, Giulio, you are right; but as to marrying—well, we will see about that. I could never have left you, but then a man is so different. It is always duty—duty—" she repeated in a faint voice, as she gazed down into the plain below them with that fixed far-away stare which sees nothing.

"I must say a few words to your mother, Gioconda," said Giulio, at last breaking the silence; "in a day or two I shall be going to Florence."

The two young people entered the courtyard of the old house, Caro in close attendance on his young mistress, and casting suspicious glances at Giulio.

Elena was busy in the big kitchen, and looked up surprised at seeing them together, as her husband had told her that Giulio would not come to Castel Poggio any more. He saw her look, and hastened to say in as firm a voice as he could command—

"Madre Elena, I have come to say good-bye for a time. I go in Settimio's stead as a soldier; he drew a low number."

“Dear, dear. Well, I hope it will be for the best, my son. I don’t like soldiering. I hope there are no Austrians where you are going?” she said sadly, thinking of her own boys.

“Oh no ; I shall be sent to Sicily, I believe.”

“What, where the brigands live, my dear boy ? Why, that is worse,” exclaimed she.

Gioconda shuddered as she heard the word Sicily, and turned away to hide her tears.

Elena knew well enough why Giulio was going away ; she came up to him, and drew his head down with both her hands, and kissed his forehead as she said—

“The Madonna preserve thee, my boy. An old woman’s blessing is not worth much, but I give thee mine. It is partly my fault that it has come to this, and I wish I could bear the penalty.”

Her wrinkled face looked almost sublime as she gazed sorrowfully on the young people, and her eyes filled with tears.

“You have told her, I see ; it is a hard task for you.”

Giulio nodded his head ; he could not trust himself to speak. After a pause, he said in a low tone—

“May she be happy, and find a good husband. Now I must go, or I shall cry like a baby.”

He wrung old Elena’s hand, and went towards Gioconda. Taking both her hands, he said—

“My treasure, good-bye. At first you will be full of

sorrow, but the Madonna will help you to do your duty to your parents. When I return I shall find I have gained a sister."

His voice failed him, and he hurried out of the house and down the hill, while the poor girl sobbed on her mother's shoulder.

Two months passed without any tidings of Giulio after his first letter to his father from Palermo, and Gioconda grew thinner and paler, though she worked as hard as ever. Her singing days were over now, and old Bettini sighed as he saw her white face and the dark circles round her eyes. Several suitors were proposed, and came to try whether pretty Gioconda would listen to them; but, though civil to all, she seemed not to understand the flowery speeches addressed to her, and when her mother praised any young peasant who had been to the house, she looked so utterly wretched that Elena could not pluck up courage to go on.

Signor Nicolini sent for Nando Bettini and inquired when Gioconda was to be married, as he would, according to custom, send up the bricklayer to whitewash the house. The old man confessed that he had not yet spoken to his daughter.

"She looks more like dying, Illustrissimo, than marrying. The light has gone from my house. It breaks my heart to see her."

"Well, well, she'll get over it. As I said before, I

don't want to be hard on you, and we won't mention the subject till next summer. But I must say love-sick girls are very inconvenient. This is October, so you will have plenty of time to talk reason to pretty little Gioconda."

The *padrone* turned away, well satisfied with his own kindness, and persuaded that human hearts can be controlled, as vines can be trimmed and trained.

The winter was an unusually severe one, and poor Bettini had the misfortune to lose one of his pair of oxen ; it slipped on the road, after a thaw, and broke its thigh. The butcher bought it at a diminished price, and the loss was considerable.

At last the old man summoned up courage to tell Gioconda that the future of her mother and himself lay with her ; either she must marry before the end of June or they must leave Castel Poggio, and he would have to descend to the condition of a day-labourer, as no one would give a *podere* to an old man without a son.

"Find me a husband," answered she, in a toneless voice ; "I will do my duty. Only, padre mio, do not let him come here to court me."

She kissed her father, and went out to tell Caro, who was her chief comforter and seemed to understand all she told him. The name of Giulio was never mentioned in the house, but Caro knew it well ; he often heard it, and always wagged his tail when it was whispered in his ear.



About Christmas time, news came from Sicily, and old Bettini heard that Giulio had distinguished himself, was a great favourite with his officers, and had been taken by the colonel as his servant. He consulted with his wife about telling Gioconda, and she advised him not to mention it. She was becoming very anxious about her daughter, who looked ill, and they owed so large a sum to their landlord, that they stinted themselves, and rarely ate meat save on feast days, while they only drank water, having given up all their share of wine to Signor Nicolini in diminution of their debt for corn.

Things meanwhile were going from bad to worse at Villa Selvi. The count's temper was uncontrollable, and he gave way to such fits of passion that no servant would stay long in the house. The bailiff, who had been a peasant on the estate of the father of the late countess, and who had promised her, before she went hopelessly mad, to protect her three children, was almost at his wits' end, and foresaw that he would have to leave or be sent away. One day he was summoned into the count's study, who received him with a volley of abuse. His second son, Lippo, had been seen in the wood which divided the Selvi from the Nicolini property, and pretty Rosina Nicolini was there also. In vain did the bailiff try to calm the storm; he made it worse, and at length he gave warning, and, throwing aside the restraint he had always imposed on himself, plainly told the count that he

was a brute, and left the room. In the garden, he met his young mistress and told her what had happened. The poor girl entreated him to try and make it up with her father; he was her only friend, and she dreaded being left alone.

Dinner-time arrived, and Count Selvi did not appear. The brothers and sister consulted together about reminding him of the hour, but for some time none dared to go to his den. At last, Maso, the eldest son, went to the door, and knocked timidly—no answer; he knocked again, and then, thinking that his father must be out, opened the door and uttered an exclamation of horror. His father was lying on the floor by his desk, one hand clenched tight on a bundle of papers, with such an expression of fury on his face as made the poor lad's blood run cold.

He convinced himself that the count was dead, and then called his brother and the bailiff and went to break the news to his young sister. The harshness and severity with which they had been treated vanished from their minds in the presence of such a catastrophe; but, in general, the count was regretted by no one, and it was whispered among the old peasant women that they had always expected him to die in some terrible way without the last rites of the Church, so that he would not go to Paradise to frighten the poor countess again in the next world.

Signor Nicolini heard of Count Selvi's death, and his pretty daughter Rosina, with the imperiousness generally belonging to an only child, insisted on his going to the villa and offering his help to the orphans. She said family feuds were all nonsense, and that neighbours ought to be friendly and help each other, and charged her father to invite the young Contessina Beatrice to come and stay with her until the funeral was over. Lippo was delighted to see the father of Rosina, and both young men eagerly accepted the invitation for their sister—a delicate, nervous girl of sixteen—thanking Signor Nicolini heartily for his well-timed visit and sympathy.

The death of Count Selvi caused a feeling of relief among his peasantry, and particularly in Giulio's family. Old Angelo wrote—or rather made one of his sons write, as he could not—to inform Giulio of what had happened, but the letter crossed him on the road. He had been wounded in a skirmish with the brigands, and had several severe attacks of malarious fever, so his colonel gave him three months' leave to recruit his strength. Great was the joy at home when Giulio arrived, rather wan and pale, but much improved in smartness, and holding himself so straight that his mother was never tired of admiring him. As soon as he heard of the death of the count he went to see his young *padroni* and beg their permission to marry Gioconda and leave his own family to enter the Bettinis' house, as soon as his military service was over.

“If you, Count Lippo,” said Giulio smiling, “will only ask the Signorina Rosina, she will persuade her father to let Gioconda wait another eighteen months for me.”

Lippo blushed scarlet, as he had no idea that his love for Signor Nicolini’s pretty daughter was known. Both the young men promised to do their best, and they recommended Giulio to go up to Castel Poggio, as they had heard from the bailiff that Gioconda was not well, and Lippo thought that the sight of Giulio would do her more good than doctor’s stuff.

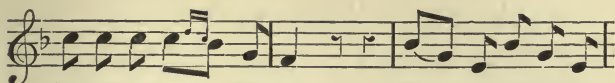
The young *contadino* went slowly through the familiar oak copse, thinking of the difference the death of one cross-grained old man made in the lives of so many people.

There were no leaves on the trees, and he could plainly see the old half-fortified farmhouse above him. As he approached, he began singing a song which had been a favourite of Gioconda’s before he left.

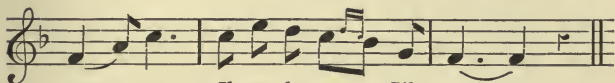
*Andantino.*

E in-ver-no e not-te bru-na, Men-tre nell'er-ma  
Cold in the bleak De-cem-ber, Lone in the chamber

stan-za, Fos-ca lu-cea la lu-na,  
drea-ry, Gil-dor is gaz-ing wea-ry,



Un pal - li - do chia-ror      Can - to questa ro -  
 In - to the deep' - ning night,      Longing, and sad, and



- man - za,      Il re - du - ce,      Gil - dor.  
 weep - ing,      There in the murk moon - light.

“Tu mi dicesti un giorno  
 Con lacrime dirotte,  
 Quando farai ritorno  
 Chiamami, o mio tesoro,  
 Chiamami a mezzanotte,  
 Ti volerò sul cor.

“Vieni diletta mia  
 La mezzanotta appressa,  
 Io gelo sulla via  
 E tu non vieni ancor.  
 Ti sei di me scordata  
 Idolo del mio cor.”

(“Darling, have you forgotten,  
 Darling, when last we parted,  
 Weeping and broken-hearted,  
 All that you vowed to me?  
 ‘Call me,’ you said, ‘but call me,  
 Love, I shall come to thee.’

“Come, then, oh! come, my darling,  
 Come, for my tears are falling.  
 Come, my whole soul is calling,  
 Darling, come back, my own.  
 No—you have quite forgotten  
 I am alone—alone.”)\*

\* Translated by Mr. Theo. Marzials.

Gioconda was preparing a warm meal for her father on his return from digging in the fields, and could not believe her ears when she heard the well-known voice.

“Madonna!—He is dead!” she exclaimed, turning white and faint.

In another moment, Giulio, forgetting wound and fever, sprang up the steps, and, clasping her to his breast, he kissed her wavy hair, murmuring, “My treasure, my darling! I have suffered so much for you, and now I have you and mean to keep you.”

Gioconda was too happy to speak. How she had longed to see Giulio again! What impossible plans she had made in the long nights, when she could not sleep, for softening Count Selvi’s heart and obtaining Signor Nicolini’s permission to wait for her lover. Now all had come right, and she gave a deep sigh of intense relief as she leant her head on Giulio’s shoulder.

He held her at arm’s-length, and then saw that his young *padrone* had spoken the truth.

Gioconda was indeed changed, and a pang went through Giulio’s heart at the thought that he might yet lose her. Her brown eyes were preternaturally large, and she looked pale and wan.

“Why, dearest, you look half-starved,” said he anxiously, but trying to smile gaily.

“So I am,” answered she, blushing scarlet, “of your company and of the old songs; but what does this



mean? I don't understand how you are here, my Giulio."

"Well, I was wounded, and then I got fever, and so my colonel sent me home, where I heard of Count Selvi's death; and so I went to my young *padroni*, and you know Conte Lippo is in love with your young *padrona*, and she will beg for us, and so, and so——"

"And so, you good-for-nothing, this is the manner in which you keep away from Castel Poggio," rang out old Bettini's voice, more cheerfully than it had done for many a long month. "Well, my son," he continued, "I am right glad to see you again, and so will Elena be. As to Gioconda, I suppose she has told you already how grieved she is at the sight of your face. You must come and put some colour into her cheeks, my boy, and help me get the land a little into order. I am sadly behind-hand with the pruning this year, and we owe the *padrone* such a large sum that we have been on short commons lately."

"Ah! well, Padre Nando, all will come right now; and, as they don't want me at home, I shall come as your *garzone* (hired labourer), if you will have me, and we'll soon get things into proper order."

Elena now came in, and her joy was quite childish. Giulio had always been her especial favourite, and she had prayed hard to her patron saint that she should manage that he and Gioconda might be married some day.

With the instinctive good-breeding which is so strong in the Tuscan peasantry, Giulio now took his leave. He had a shrewd suspicion that the evening meal was barely sufficient for themselves, and so, with the excuse of being afraid of the evening air for his fever, he said good-bye till the morrow.

His three months' leave passed like a dream; but before he left to rejoin his regiment the marriages of Count Lippo Selvi to Rosina Nicolini and of Giulio to Gioconda were settled. Rosina coaxed her father into making Gioconda a present of their debt for corn, and Giulio had worked to such purpose that the crops promised well and the olive-trees showed abundant flower-buds.

The roses had returned to Gioconda's cheeks, and *stornelli* and *rispetti* echoed gaily again round the old farmhouse.

Even Caro looked younger and gayer than before. The year and three months of Giulio's service with his regiment passed quickly enough to Gioconda, who worked hard to increase her dowry, and on a fine June morning the good old priest, Don Raffaello, married them in the little parish church.

Gioconda is now a blooming matron, with a small Nando at her knee, who rules his old grandfather with a rod of iron and is rapidly learning old-world sayings from his grandmother and little songs from his pretty mother.





MARE PICCOLO, TARENTUM.

## TARENTUM.

“L'antica storia cui non è conta  
Del gran Taranto?” . . .

*Delizie Tarantine*, CARDUCCI.

THE modern town of Taranto occupies the site of the Acropolis of the famous and splendid Tarentum, already a place of some importance when the Spartan Parthenii arrived there 707 years B.C. Of the queen of the Ionian sea, once so rich that the value and magnificence of the spoils taken by Fabius Maximus astonished the Roman citizens, little now remains but the name and immense mounds of rubbish, which are at length being scientifically examined by Professor Viola, on behalf of the Italian Government.

Taranto lies like a ship on the water, an island town. The streets are narrow and tortuous, and the houses high; some of the palaces in the upper town are handsome in a baroque, rococo style, and being all built of white stone, recall Malta. A feature peculiar to Taranto is the elaborate carving of the lunettes above the doorways, all made of wood, and most fantastic in design; a baboon's head is a favourite centrepiece. There are a

few fine gargoyles, and here and there an old balcony suggests serenades, and flowers fluttering down, and poignards gleaming.

The most important ruin of ancient Tarentum is a fine column of a Doric temple, and a fragment of its companion, encased in the wall of a little courtyard in the Oratory of the Congregation of the Trinity in the Strada Maggiore. Professor Viola tells me that the measurements exactly correspond with those of the columns of the temple of Diana at Syracuse. The height of the column is twenty-seven feet eight inches, of which nine feet ten inches are buried underground. The abacus measures one foot ten inches in height, and ten feet seven inches in width. It probably belonged to the temple of Poseidon, the titular deity of Tarentum, and was evidently one of the most important buildings of the Acropolis. The size of this column may be imagined by two people having lived on the top of the capital in a small house, which was only demolished a few years ago, and replaced by a pergola overgrown with vines, and with seats underneath for enjoying the *bel fresco*.

San Domenico, with a fine Norman doorway, stands high above the steep street of the same name, on the top of a treble flight of steps, flanked by two quaint old saints. Unfortunately the Tarentines have the Eastern passion for whitewash, and have whitened the doorway and the rose window above. The ceiling is all painted,



and the pilasters of the church bear the cross of the Knights of Malta. The seats of the choir are of fine intarsia work, and in the centre is the following modest inscription :—

“ Qualunque sia dell’ opra il lavorio,  
 Il difetto è dell’ uom, il buon di Dio.  
 “ RAPHAEL MONTEANNI,  
 “ Terræ Lequilarum, F. H. A.D. MCCLXXXVII.” \*

Just as we were coming out of San Domenico the impressive strains of a funeral march rose from the street below, and we waited on the top of the steps for the procession to pass. All the confraternities were there in their quaint mediæval dresses, as it was the burial of a person of some consequence. First came the *Addolorati*, who wore long white cotton robes with a hood tight over the face, and holes cut for the eyes; they looked most ghostly figures, quite unfit to be abroad in the bright sunlight. Then followed the *Carmeliti*, with cream-coloured mohair capes, and large, black, broad-brimmed hats, trimmed with blue silk ribbon. After them came the *San Gaetani*, in blue silk capes and white hoods covering the face; and then the bearded Capucine monks, and the Pasquilini monks who are clean shaven. The regular clergy and the canons of the cathedral, in capes of ermine and purple

\* “ Whatever is the fatigue of this work,  
 The faults are due to the man, the good is of God.”

silk, preceded the coffin, borne on the shoulders of members of the different confraternities.

I was lucky enough to be in Tarento during Holy Week, and thus saw the procession on Good Friday, which is very curious, and a source of great pride to the Tarentines. The crowd were most orderly and good-tempered, and anxious to explain everything to a foreigner. A pleasant young sailor lad told me that he had heard that at Rome, where the Pope was, they once had processions, but never one to be compared to this.

The sight was most picturesque as the procession wound round down the hill from the Borgo Nuovo, as the new part of Tarento is called—a motley, many-coloured crowd, the brilliant yellow, red, and salmon-coloured handkerchiefs the women wear tied over their heads and under their chins, and the heavy gold chains and neck ornaments they delight in, glistening in the fitful sun; the life-size painted figures swaying high above the crowd, and ever and anon stopping as the bearers rested.

The municipal band, playing a solemn funeral march, headed the procession, followed by a large black flag; then came two of the confraternity of the *Carmeliti*. They were bare-foot, and bore long white staves in their hands, representing the apostles. Then, borne high on the shoulders of four brothers of the confraternity of the *Addolorati*, in white cotton flowing robes and bare legs

and feet, was a platform with the instruments of the Passion. The next *Mistero*, as they call the painted images, was a life-size statue, either of wood or papier-mache, of Christ kneeling, His hands extended, and His face turned towards heaven; a small, winged angel, by some arrangement of wires, hovered over Him, bearing a gold cup in one hand. Two of the representatives of the apostles walked between this figure and the next, which was a most ghastly representation of Christ being scourged—an emaciated figure tied to a pillar, with the flesh all livid, lacerated, and bloody. The bearers of this figure, and of all the following ones, had crowns of thorns on their heads, as had also the four attendants, who, dressed in their holiday best, carried strong staves with an iron crescent at the top to rest the poles of the platform upon, which was a considerable weight, and hurt the bearers' shoulders, for they borrowed handkerchiefs from friends in the crowd to bind round the poles as they staggered along with difficulty.

Christ in a long crimson robe, with His hands tied and crowned with thorns, was the next figure, attended as usual by two bare-footed apostles. After this came the crucifix, so heavy that ten bearers had evident difficulty in carrying it. All round the base of the cross were stuck petroleum lamps, to be lit at sundown, and which were strangely incongruous in such an old-world scene.

An immense black cross, with yards upon yards of

white drapery most artistically arranged upon the arms, was the next *Mistero*; and now the crowd, which had been rather apathetic, showed signs of interest and some slight emotion. All the men bared their heads as a huge bier, borne by some twenty men, came slowly along. It was covered with a black velvet pall, and on this was laid the body of our Lord, covered with a fine muslin veil, all embroidered with large golden rosettes, rather the shape of sunflowers. Four apostles attended at the corners of the bier, and on either side walked two Tarentine nobles, in full evening dress and bare-headed. They are called the *Cavalieri di Cristo*, and were as much out of keeping as the petroleum lamps. A crowd of priests of different grades followed behind, and the procession wound up with a figure of the Virgin Mary in a black silk dress, holding a heart pierced with an arrow in her right hand, and an elaborately embroidered handkerchief trimmed with lace in the other. She was attended by the two last apostles.

My pleasant young Tarentine sailor told me that the privilege of carrying the *Misteri*, and having bruised shoulders for many a long day afterwards, was put up to auction, the average price being fifty francs, which went towards the expenses. Another curious custom is that one church steals from another the honour of starting and arranging the procession. Each church has its own confraternity, out of whose number the

twelve apostles are chosen. They must never leave their places near the *Misteri* in a procession, and are jealously watched by all the less fortunate confraternities. Some six years ago there was a most violent storm, and two of the unhappy bare-legged and bare-footed apostles took refuge for a moment in a *café*. The *Carmeliti* instantly rushed into their places, and have held the privilege for their church in the Borgo Nuovo ever since.

It is obligatory for the procession to visit the little church attached to the convent Delle Pentite, where the figure of the *Madonna Addolorata* is placed on a table near her altar, and all the other *Misteri* defile before her, making the round of the church one by one. Unfortunately the rain had begun to fall fast, and the thunder growled ominously before the procession could reach the Pentite, and it crowded pell-mell into another church. We went on to the convent, and saw the ghostly figures of the nuns flitting hither and thither behind the lattice windows high above the church. I was evidently an object of some curiosity to them, as well as to the small boys, who speculated as to whether I was a princess, or a man from some "far countrie."

Meanwhile the rain fell heavily outside, and the sky looked like lead; so we determined to go to dinner, and asked our nice sailor lad to join us. He appeared astonished, and at first refused, but on my pressing him



he accepted, and was a most pleasant companion, behaving with that charming, easy good breeding so characteristic of the lower classes in Italy, whose innate courtesy might serve as a model to most gentlefolk.

From him I learnt that the unhappy bearers, the apostles, the *Cavalieri*, and, in short, all who belonged to the procession, would have to stay in the small church where they had taken refuge until the next morning at ten, if the rain did not cease before eleven that evening, and admit of the performance at the Pentite, which took an hour, and must be concluded before midnight. It poured all the night, and I did not envy the crowd of people who were stewing in the little church.

The Marina, re-christened Via Garibaldi, is picturesque but decidedly dirty; the side streets are so narrow that it was a perpetual source of speculation to me what a Tarentine does when he becomes fat. Some of these alleys are only two feet wide, and populous as rabbit-warrens. The inhabitants do not look healthy; their faces are pale and pasty, but the teeth are splendid, and the hair black as a raven's wing, while the Greek blood comes out in the almost universally beautiful ears and graceful head so well poised on the shoulders. Now and then one meets a girl who might have posed for Praxiteles, or a youth who looks as though he had stepped out of a Greek vase. Occasionally the Saracen



blood shows strongly, as a swarthy fisherman strolls along, his brown net thrown over one shoulder.

Earrings are generally worn by the men in and about Taranto. The *trainieri*, or carters, have very characteristic gold circlets, shaped like a half moon, which stand out from the face, and are decidedly becoming.

Taranto was made into an island by Ferdinand I. of Arragon, who in 1480 cut through a narrow tongue of land to secure the town from the attacks of the Turks after the storming of Otranto and the massacre of the inhabitants. The noble castle built by Charles V.—now, alas! being destroyed by the Italian Government, in order to build an Admiralty—flanks the canal at its entrance into the Ionian Sea. At the other end, the fine round tower which guarded the Mare Piccolo has disappeared under the crowbar and pickaxe. The canal is to be widened and deepened to admit the largest ironclads, and Taranto is destined to become what it once was—the great seaport of Southern Italy, and to see the Mare Piccolo again teem with shipping as of old. It is cut where Hannibal dragged the ships across the land, when the Roman garrison held the citadel and prevented the Tarentine vessels from leaving the inner port.

Near the village of Statte, on the slope of the hill, is a *masseria*, or farmhouse, called Triglio, where there is an enormous cistern which collects the infiltrations from

a very large extent of country, and supplies the town with an unlimited supply of excellent water. An aqueduct is tunnelled through the rock for about four miles, and its course is marked by *spiracoli*, or air-holes. It is a marvellous piece of work, as the labourers must have cut their way through the living rock, bent double, the measurements being only four feet high and two feet three inches wide. The last three miles of the aqueduct is supported on two hundred and three arches of irregular size, and of modern construction.

A curious legend relating to the aqueduct is current among the peasants. They say that the wizard Virgil disputed with the witches for the dominion of Taranto, and tried to gain the affection of the inhabitants. A most dire drought afflicted the whole country, so Virgil thought water would be the greatest boon he could confer on the city. One night he set to work, and made the aqueduct ere morning. Before he had finished, the witches discovered what he was doing, and they began to construct the aqueduct of Saturo; but dawn broke ere they had got half-way to the city, and they heard the applause and joyous acclamations of the Tarentines at the sight of the clear, bright water brought into their town by Virgil. The witches were beaten, and their aqueduct still remains half finished and in ruins.

The first date we can establish in the history of Tarentum is the defeat of its inhabitants by the Mes-

sapians, mentioned by Diodorus in B.C. 473. The city suffered considerably on its capture by Hannibal, but nothing in comparison to the degradation it underwent when taken by Fabius Maximus, in 207. He, however, opposed its proposed reduction to a condition similar to that of Capua, and Tarentum remained the seat of the Prætor and the chief town of Southern Italy. During the civil wars between Octavian and Antony and S. Pompeius, it is often mentioned as a naval station of importance; and, in B.C. 36, an agreement between Octavian and Antony was arranged, to which Tacitus alludes as the *Tarentinum foedus*.

Brundisium rather destroyed the importance of Tarentum, and we do not find any mention of the city until after the fall of the Western Empire, when it played an important part in the Gothic wars. Taken by Belisarius, and retaken by Totila in A.D. 549, Tarentum remained in the hands of the Goths until wrested from them by Narses. In 661, Romoaldus, Duke of Beneventum, took it from the Byzantine Empire, and it fell successively into the hands of the Saracens and of the Greek Emperors, until taken by Robert Guiscard in 1063. Ever since Taranto has formed part of the kingdom of Naples.

The view seawards off "La Ringhiera," now called Corso Cavour, is most beautiful. At a little distance from the high sea-wall on which one stands is a powerful

fresh-water spring, rising with such force in the sea that a small boat cannot get near it, and a ship loses her anchor if let go beside the "Ring of Saint Cataldo." Shoals of porpoises race and tumble, glinting in the bright sun, and the gulls flap lazily over the sea, which literally swarms with fish. Watching the porpoises gambol below, Taras, the son of Poseidon and of the lovely nymph Satura, the fabled founder of the city, rose in our imagination on his dolphin from the waves, and irresistibly we recalled the splendour of the proud Tarentum, whose schools were so famous that Plato came from Athens to visit them, and was received by Archytas, the mathematician, the astronomer, the philosopher, and the brilliant writer, who was seven times named Strategos, and who, by the ascendancy of his eloquence, his virtues, and his talents, improved the laws of his country, and made them respected. A great general, he held the Lucanians in check, and the Tarentine arms, during his supremacy, were victorious. Her navy swept the Ionian sea and the whole basin of the Adriatic, and the political and commercial influence of Tarentum was at its highest point.

We thought of the great city which could send forth an army of thirty thousand foot and five thousand horse, and whose citizens dared to insult the Roman ambassador, Lucius Posthumius Megellus, who went to Tarentum to demand reparation for grievous injuries. The Roman

spoke bad Greek, and roused the laughter of the flippant Tarentines, who at length hissed him out of the theatre, as though he had been a bad actor. A buffoon, known as the Pint-pot, from his constant drunkenness, with indecent gestures, bespattered his senatorial gown with filth. Lucius held it aloft, saying, "Men of Tarentum, it will take not a little blood to wash this gown."

For ten years Tarentum, aided by Pyrrhus, maintained the war against Rome, and at first, thanks to the superior talents of their ally, and still more to his elephants, so finely described by Lord Macaulay—

" Beside him stalks to battle  
The huge earth-shaking beast,  
The beast on whom the castle  
With all its guards doth stand ;  
The beast who hath between his eyes  
The serpent for a hand—"

the Greeks had the advantage ; but near Beneventum Pyrrhus was completely defeated, and Tarentum lost her independence for ever.

The names of Pythagoras, who found an asylum with Archytas ; of Livius Andronicus, the Tarentine Greek, who gave the first rudiments of the regular drama to Rome ; of Rinthon, the founder of a new kind of burlesque-farce ; of the philosopher and musician Aristoxenes, pupil of Xenophilus and of Aristotle, of whose 453 volumes we only possess the "Elements of



Harmony," the oldest treatise extant on music, come before our minds, and we search in vain for a modern counterpart to so much that is glorious in story. Modern Taranto can only boast of one famous child, the graceful and charming musician Paisiello.

To the east of the town of Taranto, overlooking the Mare Piccolo, which is divided into two basins by the promontories of Il Pizzone and Punta della Penna, are hills formed almost entirely of shells of the murex. The Tarantine red-purple dye was celebrated, and is supposed to have owed its peculiar hue to the use of two kinds of shell-fish, *Murex trunculus*, which was the one used at Tyre, and *Murex brandaris*, used at Laconia. Pliny says the murex were caught by pandering to their greediness. Small nets with a fine mesh were used, and into these were put small shell-fish, called *mitole*, which had been kept out of the water until half dead. When lowered into the sea they gape wide open with thirst and delight, when the murex rushes up, and finding that he cannot push his long spiny snout through the meshes of the net, he thrusts his lance-like tongue into the open shells of the *mitole*, which instantly closes, catching the enemy in a vice. When the nets were drawn up the murex hung in clusters, and were sorted according to size. The small ones were pounded, the larger broken, and the fish extracted with an iron hook; the colour-bags were cut out and thrown into salt. Three



days were sufficient for maceration, and the fresher the murex the finer was the dye.

Sixteen miles in circumference, the Mare Piccolo resembles an inland lake ; its sapphire-blue water reflects the sun's rays, and it is so perfectly clear that one can distinguish the foundations of many an old building far beneath the boat. Fragments of fine Greek vases are often hauled up in the nets, and now and then an old coin is found along the beach. Fishing-boats, piled high with faggots of lentisk covered with the spawn of oysters and mussels, are perpetually shooting from under the bridge, coming in from the open sea to deposit their precious burden in the quiet depths of the inner port. The wealth of shell-fish is astounding. There are over a hundred and fifty different species, and ninety-three kinds of fish come at different times of the year to spawn in the inland sea. The fishing is worth over five million francs per annum. Tall poles stand out of the Mare Piccolo in every direction, whence are suspended, under the water, row upon row of rope made of grass, into the strands of which are stuck the spat of oysters and mussels. The ropes of mussels, called *cozze nere* at Taranto, are sold all over Italy. Razor-fish, cockles, date-mussels, sea-urchins, the various murex, and other shell-fish are eaten raw, and go by the generic name of *frutti di mare*, or sea fruit. The little market-place is picturesque, but dirty, and all kinds of fish and shells are

on sale. The elegant little sea-horses are common, and the beautiful shells of the *Pinna nobilis*, for which they still fish with the peculiar net called *pernuetico*, identical with the *pernilegum* described by Pliny.

The silky beard of the *lana-pesce*, as the fishermen call the pinna, is woven into gloves and scarves as a curiosity; in ancient times the transparent robes of the dancing girls were made of it, and it was valued as a costly and beautiful material, being either dyed purple or left the natural beautiful golden-brown hue. Fish culture and fishing have been cultivated in Taranto by the *figli del mare* (sons of the sea), as the guild of fishermen are called, from time immemorial, and the ancient laws were codified in the fifteenth century by the last prince of Taranto, John Antony de Balzo, in the *Libro Rosso*, or Red Book.

On calm summer days the fairy-like argonaut sails about on the Mare Piccolo, and one is tempted to regret that a scene so peaceful and so fraught with classical memories should be destined to become a busy arsenal and seaport.

At the further extremity from the town, two small brooks, the Cervaro and the Rascho, enter the Mare Piccolo; and opposite the Monte de' Coccioli, the hill formed of murex shells, stands the church of the Madonna del Galesio, on the little stream of Le Citrezze, the ancient Galesus. Formerly it was well wooded, but

now the flat banks of the tiny river are but scantily cultivated with cotton. Two hundred yards from where the Citrezze flows into the Mare Piccolo rise two powerful fresh-water springs, now called Citro and Citrello, with sufficient force to prevent any small boat from approaching close. On the left bank of the streamlet Virgil met the old Corycian swain, who

“With unbought dainties used to pile his board,”

thanks to his skill in agriculture.

Horace sings of

“Galesus, thy sweet stream I'll choose,  
Where flocks of richest fleeces bathe :  
Phalanthus there his rural sceptre sway'd,  
Uncertain offspring of a Spartan maid.

“No spot so joyous smiles to me  
Of this wide globe's extended shores ;  
Where nor the labours of the bee  
Yield to Hymettus' golden stores,  
Nor the green berry of Venafran soil  
Swells with a riper flood of fragrant oil.”

Martial and Pliny talk of the excellent leeks of Tarentum ; Varro praises its honey as the best in Italy. The salubrity of the climate and the fertility of the soil were celebrated. Pears, figs, oil, wine, corn, and fine white salt were among the products ; and the breed of horses was famous, and supplied the Tarentine light cavalry (*Ταραντίνος*) so noted in the armies of Alexander the Great and his successors.

The Tarentine wool has been praised by many classical writers. Varro speaks of its softness, while Strabo praises its lustre ; Pliny, Horace, and Martial all laud it, and Columella describes the great care taken of the sheep. They were never allowed to graze with their heads turned towards the sun, for fear of blindness, or let out while the dew was on the grass. Their wool was washed with wine, oiled and combed, and then covered with a cloth. The breed had degenerated in the time of Queen Joan II., who in 1415 issued an edict to relieve the guild of wool manufacturers from various imposts and taxes, in order to improve the quality of the produce.

The sheep now seen in Apulia are small, and give little wool ; they are almost universally black, with curiously brilliant yellow eyes, and agile as deer.

*Tarantismo* is still implicitly believed in, not only by the common people, but by most of the Apulian gentry. I have never seen a case, as the *tarantola* only becomes venomous when the weather is hot. The women glean- ing in the cornfields are most liable to be bitten, as they wear but scant clothing, on account of the intense heat. The following account, which differs considerably from any hitherto given, is from an eye-witness, a Tarentine gentleman, who has seen many cases.

There are various species of the insect, and two different kinds of *tarantismo*, the wet and the dry. A violent fever attacks the person bitten, who sits moaning

and swaying backwards and forwards. Musicians are called, and begin playing; if the air does not strike the fancy of the *tarantata*, as the patient is called, she moans louder, and says, "No, no, not that." The fiddler instantly changes, and the tambourine beats fast and furious to indicate the difference of the time. When at last the *tarantata* gets an air to her liking, she springs up and begins to dance frantically. If she has the dry *tarantismo*, her friends try to find out the colour of the *tarantola* that has bitten her, and adorn her dress and her fingers with ribbons that recall the tints of the insect—white or blue, green, red, or yellow. If no one can indicate the colour, she is decked with streamers of every hue, which flutter wildly about as she dances and tosses her arms in the air. The ceremony generally begins in the house, but what with the heat and the concourse of people, it often ends in the street.

If it is a wet *tarantismo*, the musicians choose a spot near a well, and the dancer is incessantly deluged with water by relays of friends, who go backwards and forwards to the well with their picturesque brown earthenware jars. My informant tells me that it is incredible what an amount of water is used on these occasions. He spoke feelingly, as drought is the great enemy of the Apulian landowners, who occasionally lose their crops and their cattle from want of rain.

When the *tarantata* is quite worn out, she is undressed



and put to bed. The fever lasts seventy-two hours, and the state of nervous excitement must be intense to sustain a woman under such fatigue as dancing for three whole days. If the musicians are not called in, and the person bitten is not induced to dance, the fever continues indefinitely, and is in some cases followed by death.

There is a master-mason living near Taranto who mocked at the whole thing, threatening to beat any of his female belongings who, if bitten by a *tarantola*, dared to try the dancing cure. As ill-luck or Saint Cataldo would have it, he was himself bitten, and after suffering great pain, and being in a high fever for several days, he at last sent for the musicians to his own house, carefully locking the doors and closing the windows. But the frenzy was too strong, and, to the malicious delight of the women, he was soon seen bounding about in the middle of the street, shrieking, "*Le femmine hanno ragione!*" (The women are right).

A favourite ornament at these mad dances are vine branches decked with ribbons of various hues, which makes one suspect that there may still linger vestiges of the old Bacchanalian orgies in these Apulian dances.

The small terra-cotta figures and heads, of which many thousands have been dug up lately at Taranto, have a distinct type of their own, and are occasionally very beautiful. The heads are remarkable for the rather theatrical exuberance of the head-dress; heavy wreaths



and large flowers like rosettes entwine the male heads as well as the female. The fine gold ornaments in the museum at Naples, which were found at Taranto, show the same love of exaggerated magnificence. Ancient writers mention many works of art ordered by the Tarentines from the great Greek artists for the decoration of their city—the *Heracles* and the *Poseidon*, by Lysippus; the *Winged Victory*, which was taken to Rome, where it became one of the chief ornaments of the Curia Julia; *Europa on the Bull*, by Pythagoras of Rhegion, and many others. Let us hope that some of these treasures, and the great candelabra of bronze, with three hundred and sixty-five burners, sent by Dionysios the younger, to be placed in the senate-house, as a proof of his friendliness for Archytas, as well as the “irate gods” left by Fabius Maximus to the conquered Tarentines, may come to light in the excavations now going on. The coins of Tarentum are among the finest in the world; the most beautiful are of the fifth and fourth century B.C. Taras astride on his dolphin, holding the trident in one hand, figures on many; in others he stands in a chariot driving two horses, which probably refer to an Agonistic victory. Shell-fish figure largely on the reverse sides of these coins, showing that the fishery was a matter of great importance even in those days. Mionnet gives a list of one hundred and twenty-five different coins of the city, a proof of the importance and richness of “imbelle Tarentum.”



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SHEPHERD OF MAGNA GRÆCIA.

## LEUCASPIDE.

AN immense rolling plain of calcareous tufa, with a scant covering of rich brown earth, studded all over with colossal olive trees of great age; cut up by long lines of rough walls, built in great measure to get rid of the stones off the cornfields, and dotted here and there with small towns and solitary *masserie* or farmhouses, glinting in the bright sunshine and looking like small fortresses; an occasional *gravina* or ravine with large boulders far below, where now and then a torrent rages for a short time in the winter, and a kestrel hovering among the rocks,—such are the first impressions of this part of Magna Græcia.

A wild, curious, melancholy country, beautiful in its way, and a very paradise for the botanist. In March the short turf is starred all over with the lovely yellow and purple *Romulia columnæ*, sometimes all purple, sometimes nearly white, with a most delicious smell, like violets, only more so. The untilled parts of the country are a soft blue-gray colour from the rosemary, which grows into immense bushes, and is used for firewood.

The carub, or locust trees, shine like green oases in the midst of the sad, grey olives, their young vegetation being of a vivid yellow-green, and the leaves looking as though they had been oiled, so brilliant are they. The lentisk, the myrtle, the white and the pink gumcistus or rockrose, and salvia grow luxuriously.

There are several species of wild mignonette, and many orchids and irises. The beautiful and curious snake's-head iris, looking as though made of black velvet shot with yellow-green, grows everywhere, and when in its favourite position, under a tall bush, sends its long, slender, reed-like leaves a yard and more up to the light.

In the cultivated land under the olive trees, the ground is in some places all flecked sky-blue, with the exquisite iris *Moræa fugax*, which, alas! lasts but six hours, uncurling its delicate flowers at midday, and dying with the setting sun. There are, however, several flowers on each of them, so their beauty lasts longer than might be imagined. Purple anemones grow strong and tall, and the vetches are abundantly represented; there is one in particular exactly the colour of a ruby, which in the sun is positively dazzling. The wild cucumber trails along the dusty banks with its pale yellow flowers, and the *Cynoglossum columnæ*, all covered with down like a maiden's cheek, looks sickly with its glaucous leaves and queer little roseate flowers, like drops of old port wine.

Squills grow luxuriantly, and the stately, graceful



asphodel surround the base of the olive trees, the larger variety sending up a flower stem some four feet high. In the moonlight it looks a weird, unearthly flower, bending slowly to the sea breeze, and old Homer's lines rose to one's mind :—

αἴψα δ' ἴκοντο κατ' ἀσφοδελὸν λειμῶνα  
ἔνθα τε ναίουσι ψυχὰι, εἶδωλα καμόντων.

—“ Again they came to the asphodel meadow, where the spirits dwell, the shades of the dead ”—as ever and anon the strange, pungent smell rose heavily to the sky. Here and there a palm tree towers far up towards the sky, drooping its feathery leaves as though pining for its distant brethren in Africa.

No wonder the people here believe in witches and in magic: the lonely expanses of country, the fantastic shapes of the carub and olive trees—in whose misshapen trunks the brigands used to hide, dressed in stuff resembling the colour of the trees, so that the soldiers often passed within a few paces of the men they were tracking; the innumerable old tombs, crypts, and remains of ancient buildings scattered about on every side, are all well calculated to impress an ignorant population.

The prickly pear assumes the proportions of a small tree, and is a source of considerable profit to the proprietors, as it flourishes where nothing else will grow, and six of the red or yellow luscious fruit sell for five

centimes in the towns. On asking how they managed to pick the fruit from the huge, tangled mass of broad leaves, all covered with minute and penetrating prickles, they told me there was a plant called *Fumulu*, with which they wipe the leaves and fruit, and which destroy the innumerable prickles. This same plant is said to cause blindness, swelling of the head, and ultimately to kill *white* sheep. The fact is that one seldom sees any but black sheep, which they say are not affected by the *Fumulu* (*Iperico crispo*).

Apulia is very sparsely inhabited. There are no cottages, and the field-work is all done by gangs of men and women from the various small towns. Wages are low: a man gets one franc a day, a woman half that sum, save at harvest-time, or when the olives are gathered; then a woman receives seventy to eighty centimes, a man from two to two and a half francs. The day's work is a poor one, as many of the labourers live from two to five miles from their work, so they come late and leave early, besides being tired by walking such a distance. This state of things may change as the sense of security increases. It is hardly credible that up to 1816 the Turkish and Algerian corsairs used to carry off women and young boys and girls into slavery! Until after the bombardment of Algiers by Lord Exmouth, no woman was safe near the sea-coast. After this came the brigandage, which only ceased in 1862, when twenty-

one brigands were killed in a pitched battle, and eleven taken as prisoners to Taranto, where they were shot next morning in the market-place.

The agricultural instruments are curiously primitive. The spade is unknown, and everything is done with a short-handled and much-bent hoe. Earth and stones are carried, exactly as in Egypt, in small rush-baskets on one shoulder, each basket containing about twelve handfuls. I attempted to explain a wheelbarrow to an Apulian peasant with signal unsuccess; no doubt he would use it as the Arabs did, when M. de Lesseps tried to introduce them at Ismailia on the Suez Canal—turn them topsyturvy to sleep under.

The plough weighs from eight to ten pounds, and consists of two very slender bent boughs of olive, or ilex, as shafts, and a tiny wooden coulter, roughly shaped with a hatchet, which just scratches the soil when the man leans on a stick that he fits into a hole on the upper part. Sometimes one sees fourteen pairs of oxen and five or six pairs of mules ploughing in a line under the olives; the fields are very large, and they make no furrows for the water to drain off. When the day's work is over, the plough is tied on to the horns of one ox, who trails the shafts on each side as he sedately paces homewards.

The common people, particularly to the north of Taranto, are wonderfully Eastern in look and manner;

the tall, lithe figure, the bright face, brilliant teeth, and peculiar bluish tinge of the white of the eye, all tell of the Saracen blood. When one meets a shepherd trudging through the bushes after his small, wild, black sheep, he grins from ear to ear, saying *salute* (salve), and then pours out a torrent of incomprehensible dialect, raising his voice to a shout as he perceives that you cannot understand a word. His good-bye is *state vi ben* (keep well), and he will generally call you *tu* (thou), not from any want of respect, but from old custom. He dresses in a waistcoat and trousers all of one piece, made of goat's skin, with the hair turned inside, and a brown cloth jacket woven from the fleeces of his black sheep. The shepherds guide their flocks partly by voice and partly by throwing stones; they are unerring shots, and a marauding lamb who has ventured into the corn, jumps high off the ground on receiving a stone on its nose. The shepherds play, on a kind of flute fashioned out of a cane, wild, melancholy music, which recalls Pan's pipes, as the sound is wafted across a ravine, mingled with the deep booming of the cows' bells and the sharp tinkle of the smaller ones around the neck of the bell-wether.

The *masserie*, or farmhouses, look very imposing, generally placed on elevated ground, to avoid the malaria as far as possible, and built of white stone, which glitters in the sunshine. They consist almost

invariably of a very large open courtyard, surrounded with high walls. On one side of the yard is an immense vaulted cow-house, built of stone, with a manger running all around, divided off for each animal. In the centre of each division is sunk a common majolica plate, and, after the beasts have finished their meal of chaff and oats, the *massaro delle bestie*, or cowkeeper, goes around and sweeps the dust and refuse into the plate, whence it is easily cleared and thrown away. Out of this stable open immense vaulted chambers, with apertures in the roof where the chaff is thrown in. At one end is a large archway leading into a room with a chimney-shaft in the middle of the roof. Over a great slab of stone, on which olive branches smoulder, hangs a cauldron full of water; all around the room runs a raised bench of stone, and on this are spread the miserable mattresses which serve the shepherds as beds. Their food consists chiefly of a thick *purée* made of beans, seasoned with a little salt, when they can afford it.

The sheep's milk is excellent, very rich in cream, and fragrant in taste from the quantity of thyme and other sweet herbs eaten by the sheep. The *ovile* or sheep-pen stands at a little distance from the *masseria*; it consists generally of three large yards, one for the ewes in milk, one for the lambs, and one for the ewes which are not giving milk. At one end of the yard for the milk-ewes is a tiny hut, divided in the middle; here sit two men



near apertures just large enough to admit one sheep at a time. A boy stands in the yard and pushes one ewe after another through the holes into the hut, where the men lay hold of the poor beasts by their tails, as they try to rush past. They then milk them into big pails in an incredibly short space of time. Each ewe gives a little under a quart of milk a day, and as soon as they are allowed to run out of the door of the hut, the lambs are waiting for their mothers, and finish any drop of milk the men leave. The *massaro delle pecore*, or shepherd, makes a sort of dry curd, called *ricotta*, which is delicious, particularly when mixed with the honey which fully justifies the praises of the poets. The *ricotta marzotica*, made in March and salted, keeps far into summer, and resembles the little Normandy cheeses. In May, when the herbage is most luxuriant, they make cream an inch thick, from cows' or buffaloes' milk, like the Turkish *caimak*. *Lu quagliatu*, very like the Eastern *yaghourt*, is a common dish here, as it is in Sardinia—a reminiscence of the Saracen invasion. *Cacio cavallo* (horse cheese) is also excellent; it is shaped like a small club, and gets its queer name from being suspended, *a cavallo* (astride), tied in pairs, across a bar of wood.

The great produce is oil; but partly from the scarcity of labour, partly from the want of energy and enterprise in the people, it is so badly made as to be almost unsalable in the rest of Italy. The olives are allowed to



hang on the trees until they fall from sheer rottenness. The idea is that in this way more oil is obtained ; but if a storm comes, thousands of olives are swept away by the rain, and in any case the oil is of a bad colour, and the taste rancid and earthy. There is a considerable export of wool and corn ; but the sheep are a small, stunted breed, only giving an average of two and a quarter pounds of wool per head. The cattle are hardy, dark grey in colour, and with hoofs like iron : the cross-roads in Apulia are generally tracks worn in the rock, and the oxen are unshod. Cotton is extensively grown : the staple is short, but the quality excellent, and in every house is a loom where the women weave all the sheets, quilts, and necessary household stuff, and the material for their own clothes.

The horses are chiefly Dalmatian and Sardinian—handsome, courageous little beasts, full of fire, and doing their forty or fifty miles at a swinging trot. The mules are splendid, and the donkeys excellent. In general the animals are well treated, and look sleek and fat.

Close to the *masseria* of Leucaspide, belonging to a well-known and popular member of London society, Sir James Lacaità, one can trace the old chariot-road from Taranto to Gnatia, on the Adriatic, where Horace slept on his journey to Brindisi.

The Leucaspide, or heavy infantry with the white shields, who served under Pyrrhus at the battle of

Asculum, are supposed to have encamped here, and all about the property are remains of old tombs and cave habitations. One seldom goes out without finding fragments of pottery, some of fine texture, light, and of a brilliant black or a soft grey colour; many pieces, bearing traces of paint or of incised ornamentation, are evidently Greek, others are coarse, heavy, and hand-made, before the invention of the potter's wheel.

The *masseria* of Leucaspide stands about two hundred feet above the sea, and is of the usual dazzling white stone. It was a mere ruin, but Sir James Lacaita has added considerably to the farmhouse, and has built a long *loggia* or arcade all along the south-west front, which overhangs a garden full of orange and lemon trees, with great yellow masses of brobdingnagian house-leek and patches of blue Parma violets. To the south lies the town of Taranto, about six miles off, shining like driven snow in the sun, and the two islands, once Chœrade, now San Pietro and San Paolo, seem to float on the milky coloured water. The Ionian Sea is some six miles from the *masseria*, and on the other side of the beautiful bay rise the snow-capped mountains of the Basilcate, and farther off, gradually fading into mist on the far horizon, are the Calabrian mountains, rugged and wild as their inhabitants. The sky is of a pale, clear blue, and the sunsets are like a picture by Turner.

Directly opposite, on the Basilcate shore, lies the

village of Metaponto, mentioned in the *Odyssey* as Alybas, founded by the hero of that name, who gave hospitality to Hercules when he took back the oxen of Geryon to Greece. While Hercules was in the house the wife of Alybas had a son, and they named him Métabos, "born after the arrival of the oxen." Metaponto only appears in real history about the seventh century B.C., when, after the destruction of the old town of Métabos by the barbarians who came down from the hills, the Sybarites sent a colony under Leucippos, chiefly formed of fugitive Messinians, who founded the new Metaponto. Pythagoras went there when driven out of Crotona towards the end of the sixth century B.C., and was received with every mark of admiration and respect. He died there, owing to the persecution of Cylon, whose partisans set fire to the edifice where the philosopher was teaching.

Of ancient Metaponto nothing now remains but fifteen large columns, the relics of a temple. Everything that could be used for building purposes has long since been taken away, and a ruin, discovered and partially excavated by the Duc de Luynes in 1828, has shared the same fate. The emblem of Metaponto was an ear of corn, symbol of the goddess of plenty; most of the ancient coins of the city bear it, sometimes in conjunction with a locust.

On a clear day, a little to the left, you can distinguish,

on rising ground, the farmhouse of Policoro, belonging to Prince Gerace, which stands on the site of Heracleia, founded B.C. 432 by the Tarentines. The city was in alliance with the Lucanians and the Tarentines against Rome in 278 B.C., and it was doubtless to detach them from their old friends that the Romans granted the Heracleians a treaty of alliance on such favourable terms that Cicero called it

“Prope singulare fœdus.”

The town seems to have suffered severely in the Social War, as we learn that all its records were destroyed by fire. The *Tabulæ Heracleenses*, one of the most interesting monuments of antiquity, were found close by. These bronze tables are now in the Museum at Naples; they bear a Latin inscription relating to the municipal regulations of Heracleia, but which is only a copy of a more general law, the *Lex Julia Municipalis*, promulgated in 45 B.C. for all the towns of Italy. On the back is a Greek inscription of far earlier date. Coins and bronzes have been found in considerable numbers, and the most beautiful Greek vases in the Naples collection were found at Heracleia. The coins bear a noble head, in profile, of Minerva, with the scylla on her helmet, and Hercules wrestling with the lion on the reverse, his club beside him, and a little bird between his legs.

To the right, as we look across the bay, and behind Policoro, rises a mountain, called La Spina di Latronico,

in shape like Vesuvius; and a little to the left one sees the great mass of the Pollino group, the highest point of which exceeds six thousand feet, and is clothed in snow till far into the summer. Further again to the south the mountains sink, and we know that Sybaris, the great city founded B.C. 720, famous for its opulence and power, lies hidden in the earth, with the waters of the Crathis flowing above it, through what is now a desolate swamp, frequented by vast herds of buffaloes and pestilent with fever. Yet more to the left, but lost in the mists, rise the Calabrian Mountains, which fall towards the sea, forming the three Iapygian promontories, on one of which, now Capo delle Colonne, stands all that is left of the celebrated temple of the Lacinian Juno, the one column which, standing out solitary against the blue sky, serves as a landmark to the mariner.

Crotona, celebrated in ancient history for the extreme beauty of its inhabitants and for its school of medicine, is now represented by the small town of Cotrone, whose women pass for the handsomest of all the country around. The famous picture of Helen, for which Zeuxis was allowed to choose five of the most beautiful virgins of the city as his models, has long since disappeared; but it is to be hoped that the excavations which Professor Viola, an enthusiastic and learned archæologist, is to undertake for the Italian Government, will throw some light on the almost unknown history of the famous cities

of Magna Græcia. Numerous coins have been found, the most ancient of a type peculiar to Magna Græcia, called *incuse*, one side convex, the other side concave. The earlier ones bear a tripod, the later have an angry-looking full face of the Lacinian Juno, and on the reverse a seated Hercules with a vase in his right hand.

Behind the *masseria* of Leucaspide runs the wild picturesque Gravina di Leucaspide, the rocks in some places all overgrown with rosemary, myrtle, gumcistus, and lentisk, which in March is just coming into bloom, the buds looking like small portions of the crimson "Love-lies-bleeding" stuck on all over the boughs. The wild pear-trees in full bloom shine like snow in the sun, and wild olives spring up on every side, mixed with the feathery *Pinus maritima* and the ilex. In the gravine is a natural cavern, of difficult access, as the rocks are slippery, and one has to scramble down the rugged declivities for sixty feet before reaching the narrow ledge in front of the cave, with some hundreds of feet of precipice below. We found traces of ancient paintings, which have been almost defaced by holes made in the centre of them; these must be of old date, the broken rock being of the same colour as the rest. The cavern runs over four hundred and fifty feet into the earth, and branches off into two arms, both ending in a lofty chamber, with long stalagmites which glistened yellowish-white as our lamps flashed upon them. One



could trace signs of couches cut in the rock, but at present the only inhabitants are bats and owls. We could find no crosses cut in the roof, or on the sides of this cave, as on all the others I have seen about here.

This gravina runs down towards the sea-shore, and gradually opens out and loses itself in the flat land. Towards Taranto lies a smaller ravine, the Gravina Mater Gratia, one of the wildest dells one can see, like an ideal drop-scene for the *Freischütz*. Near the end is a church of good size, with some dozen large columns standing in front, as though the intention had been to make it still larger. This church has been built on the site of an old sanctuary where, they say, once lived a holy hermit. Unluckily, to build the comparatively modern church and a house attached, they have cut away and destroyed great part of the old chapel, which was hewn out of the rock, and still bears traces of painting all over the roof and walls. Where the altar once stood is a daub of recent date, painted on the rock, perhaps covering an ancient fresco; a Christ on the cross and the Maries round, with a saint and a kneeling ox. Once a year people go on a pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Mater Gratia, and occasionally a mass is said in the church, whose doors stand wide open, the altar already for service, and no human creature near. The house is empty, and is falling to ruin, and the little garden which had once been walled round and evidently

well cared for, was a wilderness. It was like a fairy tale, and I expected one of the big green lizards who lay basking in the sun on the rocks suddenly to cast off its skin and appear as a hoary hermit.

Opposite the church is a large cavern divided into three rooms, which bears traces of having been inhabited; there are the remains of a cistern for rain water and of an oven, and several benches cut in the rock around the sides of the cave. A little further on is a similar old rock-house, but smaller.

The tradition runs, that long ages ago a particularly fine ox disappeared from the herd; people searched for him for a long time, and at last the entrance to the gravina was found, all overgrown with ivy, clematis, and other creeping plants. On exploring the ravine the rock-cut chapel was discovered, and the missing ox on its knees in adoration of a picture of the Madonna. Hence the name of the gravina, "Mater Gratia."

About two miles from Leucaspide, on the farm of San Giovanni, also belonging to Sir James Lacaita, is a high, flat expanse of nearly bare rock, where once was a forest, and towards the centre, on a small round mound, stands the Tavola del Paladino, or Paladin's table—a huge, irregular slab of stone, supported on four smaller ones, and evidently the tomb of some ancient hero buried near an old chariot-road, whose ruts can be followed for miles in the rock.

Professor Viola had long wished to excavate here, and Sir James Lacaita had kindly put off the work until I could be present. On a splendid morning we started in high spirits, with four men to dig, or rather hoe, out the treasures we had made up our minds to find. It was a beautiful scene: the expanse of rocky land, with rosemary bushes wherever there was an inch of soil, and the purple wind-flowers glowing in the sun; the lovely Ionian Sea rippling with a slight breeze, and the larks soaring above, singing aloud; a company of cranes, too, we heard far out of sight, and the inevitable kestrel hovered close by.

Broken bits of stone lay round about the Tavola del Paladino, as though the slab had once been much longer. We soon perceived that the tomb had long ago been rifled, but we dug out some human remains, among them one perfect upper jawbone, and several pieces of two lower jawbones with some splendid teeth, and a considerable quantity of rough prehistoric pottery, called "Bucchero Italico." Everything was found in the uncovered portion of the tomb facing eastwards. It forms a right angle seventeen feet nine inches long and six feet six inches broad, only half of which is at present covered by the Tavola, which is raised three feet three inches off the ground, and rests on four upright slabs, the one towards the east only supporting half the covering-stone and leaving a perfect doorway, by which one can

enter underneath to what was perhaps the Sacellum, while the slab nine feet nine inches long and seven feet broad may have really served as the table for funeral feasts in honour of the hero or heroes who have been buried below. We dug out about two feet of earth, and found that the bottom of the tomb was formed of the solid rock, while long slabs of stone had been neatly arranged around the sides, so as to form a huge coffin.

Professor Viola said that this was the first megalithic tomb that had been excavated in the province of Lecce ; he hopes it may lead to the exploration of others, in order to try and throw some light on the life of the ancient inhabitants, who, about here, were, without doubt, of Iapygian race. All the excavations made hitherto in and near Taranto by Signor Viola which can be referred to this ancient epoch have shown different characteristics : the "Buccherio Italico" was always mixed with oriental vases, or the native imitations, none of which we found in the Paladin's tombs. We know that the Greeks came to Taranto in 707 B.C., and the Phœnicians had traded in the Ionian Sea long before, bringing the Oriental pottery with them, which was gradually copied by the native inhabitants ; so I leave any learned reader to establish a date for the Tavola del Paladino.

Our workmen had their own theory, which did not quite agree with the remarks of the learned professor.

They first said it was Christian, and when we told them that the bones belonged to some hero who died long before our Lord was born, "Yes! that is nothing; in those days the Christians did not die, they were buried alive by the pagans, who in their turn were killed by the Paladins, who sat around this very stone and feasted after their battles."

At a small distance from the Tavola del Paladino runs the Gravina di San Giovanni, wilder than any other, and where we just missed seeing a wolf who had frightened a shepherd-boy some two hours before. They are not so common here as in Calabria, where lives are lost every winter in encounters with the savage brutes. When the peasants chance to kill one, the head and skin are carried around in triumph to the different *masserie*, and the men get presents of money, eggs, or grain.

About half-way down the Gravina di San Giovanni another small ravine enters it at right angles, running up towards Accetta, a *masseria* belonging to the Cordiglia family, who are most courteous and kind to strangers. This small Gravina ends abruptly in a sharp point, and is planted with orange trees of divers species. It is a wonderful sight, like the garden of the Hesperides. The trees, being entirely protected from wind, grow luxuriously, and the leaves are of a glossy dark green. The high rocky walls of the ravine are hollowed out by the action



of water into caves of most fantastic shapes ; some are quite hidden under curtains of ivy and clematis, and the rich black soil is carpeted with wild flowers. The golden-red oranges above one's head, and within reach of one's hand, seemed to set the very air on fire. There were about sixty thousand hanging on the trees in a little over an acre of ground. Don Nicòla Cordiglia gave me one small bough with eight oranges in one cluster.

The Spanish titles of "Don" and "Donna" are universal here, and every one is called by their Christian name—"Don Alessandro," "Donna Veneranda," and so forth. The dependants kiss their master's hand and say "Eccellenza," but have a pleasant, frank way with them, and a sense of their own dignity, which is delightful. They are an honest race too, for doors are left open, and the large orange gardens are unguarded. The cattle remain out in the fields for six months of the year, the people all sleeping in the houses for fear of fever. Ladders for pruning the tall olive trees are left out night after night, miles away from the *masserie*, and as they are worth some ten to fifteen francs, and the people are miserably poor, I think it says wonders for the population. Just under the windows of Leucaspide, in the cornfields, there is a gang of women at work weeding, all in a line, with an overseer walking backwards in front of them. They come from Gioia, a large town some twenty-four miles distant, and they stay two months



for field-work. Two are old women, the other nine young girls, of whom two are strikingly handsome. One is a perfect Arab, the other a pure Greek type, with delicate profile and the peculiar hands of the Venus of Medici, small and bent, with very curved fingers.

One evening Sir James Lacaita (who is as popular among the Apulian peasants as he is in London drawing-rooms) invited the women and some bricklayers who are working here to come upstairs and dance the "Pizzica" and sing. I sat next to the Greek beauty, and never met a more modest, nice-mannered girl; she talked more intelligible Italian than the others, and told me she was trying to earn money for her wedding. She danced beautifully, beginning with almost invisible steps, gliding over the floor, her apron coquettishly held in the fore-finger and thumb of each hand; then suddenly she would raise one arm above her head, holding the other bent backwards on the hip, and, snapping her fingers, would hop around her dancer, seeming to flaunt at him, and to dare him to follow her. The man she danced with had a superb figure, and seemed to fly, with the backs of his open hands resting on his hips, his head well erect, and his eyes sparkling with excitement. As one dancer tired, another rose and rushed into the dance. After some tumblers of wine had been passed round, a song was suggested, and one of the men began a sentimental love-song with the guitar. Then I begged for a

real peasants' song, and took down the words of the *sonetto*, as they call it :—

“Quanno s'affacce tu, donna reale,  
Ognuno dicerà : Mo spande 'lu sole ;  
Non è lu sole e manco so' li stelle  
E lu splendore che caccé sta donna belle.”

(When thou lookest forth, royal lady,  
Every one will say ; Now the sun is shining.  
It is not the sun, nor yet the stars,  
But the splendour sent forth by this beautiful woman.)

The tune is wild and melancholy, and recalls Arab music in its long notes, ending almost with a sob.

The instruments were a guitar and a guitar battente, which has but five silver strings, and makes a sort of shrill, incessant accompaniment ; a tambourine, which one man played splendidly, and a deep earthenware pot, covered with tightly stretched sheep-skin, in the centre of which is a hole ; through this is forced a round, smooth piece of wood. The player begins by spitting two or three times into his hand, and then moves it up and down the stick as fast as he can. This produces a queer droning sound, rather like a bagpipe in the far distance.

Even the oldest woman occasionally got up and danced, and seemed to enjoy it as much as the girls. They told me they slept on trestle beds with straw mattresses, in a big room off the courtyard. Their food consists of *la farinella*, coarse flour made of maize, which they bring with them in sacks and eat with wooden spoons, chewing

it into a kind of paste, and swallowing it without any other preparation.

About eight miles south of Taranto lies the old baronial castle of the Princes of Leporano, head of the Muscettola family, one of whom was general under Charles V. at the siege of Florence. Apulia literally swarms with these baronial castles ; nearly every little village is crowned by a huge keep, generally of about the time of Charles of Anjou, with massive towers and large vaulted rooms. From the fine terrace of Leporano, now falling into decay, one can see the Torre di Satura, which probably marks the site of Saturum, as there are traces of mosaic pavements and of a subterranean passage. The Muscettola family, now represented by a female branch line, was one of the oldest in Italy ; they came originally from Ravello, near Amalfi, where the fine bronze gates of the ancient cathedral were erected in 1179, by Sergio Muscettola and his wife Sigelgaita, to the honour of the mother of God.

About a mile beyond Leporano is the magnificent castle of Pulsano, also belonging to the Muscettolas, and fast falling to ruin. The village now clusters close up to the keep, as the high wall, with a tower at each corner, has been destroyed. Pulsano is a noble example of the thirteenth century, an irregular oblong, with one large square tower and two smaller round ones on the left side, and one immense round tower and one square on the right.

The cellars are spacious, and the living rooms, now used as granaries, bear traces of former splendour, in fine fireplaces and gilt doors. There is a wide stone staircase from the courtyard to the first floor, and a very narrow breakneck one, out of a room leading on to the roof, whence one can climb to the top of the five towers, each of which forms a room. The view is very beautiful : on one side the bay of Taranto, laughing in the bright sun, and all round a brilliant green carpet of young corn, dotted here and there with gray-green olive trees.

One peculiarity of Pulsano is a long, narrow, precipitous staircase, which runs like a ladder up from the courtyard to the roof. In the cellar is still kept a huge stone ball, with a hole punched half through it. This ball was put on a spike at the top of the staircase, and sent rolling down on to the assailants. The population of the two villages of Leporano and Pulsano are of quite a different type from the Tarentines. They are very handsome, and generally fair ; we saw some children with perfectly flaxen hair and ruddy complexion.

Further south, towards Lecce, the peasants still speak a kind of bastard Greek. I give a specimen of their songs, as the language is fast dying out, and will soon become a thing of the past.

“ Aspro ne to charti, aspro to chioni,  
 Aspro ne to calàzi ce o prozìmi,  
 Aspro to sfondilòssu ce o brachioni  
 Mmesa sto pettossù mila afs' asiml.

Jamena se pingepsan dio mastori  
Isane Patriarchi Serafini."  
Ce se pingepsan ce se caman oria  
Ce Angelu en ei mancu stin gloria."

(" White is paper and white is the snow,  
White is the milk and also the leaven,  
White is thy neck and also thy fine arms,  
In the midst of thy breast are two silver apples.  
For me thou hast been painted by two masters,  
They were Patriarchs and Seraphim,  
And they painted thee and made thee so lovely  
That there is no Angel (like thee) even in heaven.")

" Ana petànu andróchimu  
Pesune s'tin auléddasu  
Na me patù ta podiasu  
Na me cheri psicheddamu."

(" When I die, my dear brown one,  
Bury me in thy small courtyard,  
So that I may be trodden by thy feet,  
And my little soul may rejoice.")

" De apsi cámila,  
De apsi cálasa,  
De apsi gíneca  
Mai calo ístasa."

(" Neither from fog,  
Nor from hail,  
Nor from woman  
Will ever come good.")

On the other side of Leucaspide, to the north is the curious and weirdly beautiful little town of Massafra, situated on a small hill cut in two by a deep rugged ravine, spanned by a fine bridge, the arches some three

hundred feet high. If I had been suddenly dropped blindfolded into Massafra, and then told to take the bandage off my eyes and say where I was, I should have answered, "Egypt." The people are pure Arabs in look and gesture, the shrill intonation of the voice is Arab, so are the splendid eyes and brilliant teeth. Their passion for bright colours in their dresses, and for daubing red, yellow, blue, and green paint on the outside of their miserable huts, is quite Eastern. They talk an impossible *patois*, which even the people round find it difficult to understand. The tradition runs that the Saracens, gradually driven back from Taranto, settled there, withstanding all attempts to dislodge them; thence the name *Massa Africa* (the rock of the Africans), now *Massafra*. But no one really knows much about the place.

The hill on which the little city stands is all overgrown with prickly pears, and one or two feathery palm-trees wave slowly to the wind, perhaps planted by the swarthy Saracens, as the palm is said to live longer than any other tree.

The view of the bridge is most extraordinary, and very picturesque. The two steep sides of the ravine are alive with people, who still inhabit the old cave dwellings of the aboriginal races of this country. Overhanging the precipice, and partly cut out of the living rock, is a noble mediæval castle, its large round towers going sheer down to the bottom of the *gravina*, where in winter there is



sometimes a raging torrent, which occasionally floods the lower caves, and drives the poor inhabitants out for a time.

I went down a steep path opposite the castle for a little way, and looked into the rock habitations. Some had no doors of any sort, and contained a bedstead, a wooden box, and a chair ; occasionally the people had built a sort of entrance porch, and in one a woman was sitting spinning cotton, which is extensively grown round the town. Two hens were perched on the back of the chair, and a goat lay chewing the cud at her feet.

The modern and extremely dirty town is built on the summits of the two hills, and extends down a broad road towards the railway station. About a mile and a half behind the town, in the bottom of the gravina, is the church of the Madonna della Scala, so called from the immense staircase which has been built to get down from the road to the bottom of the ravine. The modern church has been erected on the site of one of ancient date, hewn out of the rock, and of which a part is still existing ; a small chapel with a rather majestic Virgin and child painted on the wall, over an altar cut out of stone, and an arched passage, of which one side only is left, with saints, rather above life size, painted in fresco and of wonderfully vivid colours. These, although Byzantine in character, do not appear older than the thirteenth century. In the modern church is a Madonna with the infant

Jesus, of which the usual fable is related: a light was seen hovering in the gravina, a peasant dug and discovered the holy picture. It is so blackened by smoke that I could only just make out its Byzantine outline on a gold background. The whole of the ravine of Massafra is honeycombed with the ancient cave habitations of the prehistoric inhabitants; to whom succeeded the early Christians, who hid there, doubtless from persecution, and who cut the cross in nearly every cave I saw. After them the Saracens, who gradually adopted Christianity, and amalgamated more or less with the Greeks, took possession of the rock-hewn dwellings, and at Massafra their descendants still inhabit them.

Now that the railway has made communication easy, doubtless the history of this interesting and fascinating country will be more studied. The great want at present is decent inns. Travellers in Apulia, and still more in Calabria, must be prepared to rough it considerably, but the place and the people are delightful. Taranto is to become the great naval station of Southern Italy, and every one is looking forward with great interest to what may come to light when the docks are dug out on the site of "molle Tarentum."

THE END.

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